

***Tum Teav:***  
**A Study of a Cambodian Literary Classic**

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## Abstract

One of the cornerstones of the Cambodian literary canon is the verse novel *Tum Teav*. There are numerous versions of the story that cover all the major modes of creative expression in Cambodian culture. In addition to the literary and theatrical versions, the story also appears in different historical texts, as it is generally believed that the characters described in the story are based on actual people and events in Cambodian history. Despite *Tum Teav*'s tremendous importance and popularity however, there are no studies that examine the extensive literary criticism on the text or the influence of the story in contemporary Cambodian culture and society. This work is an attempt to present an overview of the literary criticism on *Tum Teav* and provide the reader with an insight into the viewpoints of contemporary Cambodian writers and intellectuals on the major themes in the story.

Chapter 1 discusses different versions of the story in various genres, including literary, historical, oral, theatrical, and film, in order to demonstrate the story's importance in Cambodian culture and society.

Chapter 2 presents my revised translation of *Tum Teav* by Venerable Botumthera Som that was begun while completing my MA degree at Cornell. Venerable Botumthera Som's manuscript was completed in 1915 and is the best-known version of the story.

Chapter 3 examines different texts of literary criticism on *Tum Teav*, giving special attention to the controversy concerning the original author of the story. This chapter also discusses major themes in the story, namely traditional codes of conduct, abuse of power, and justice, and uses various examples from Cambodian literature to illustrate them further.

Chapter 4 concludes this work with an analysis of several interviews that I conducted with Cambodian writers and scholars concerning the major themes in the story. Particular attention is given to the influence of *Tum Teav* in Cambodian culture and society, especially the theme of justice in light of the pending trials of the former members of the Khmer Rouge for crimes of genocide.



## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	2
Acknowledgements.....	8
Chapter 1: The Importance of <i>Tum Teav</i> .....	10
Introduction	10
A Brief Summary of Tum Teav	12
Different Versions of Tum Teav	16
Oral Versions	16
Historical Versions	21
The Royal Chronicles	22
Eng Soth	33
Mak Phoeun	37
Khin Sok	39
The Place of Tum Teav in the Cambodian Literary Canon	42
Literary Versions	47
Sandhor Mok	49
Venerable Botumthera Som	52
Nou Kan	55
Kong Huot and Chau Seng (French Adaptation)	58
Modern Adaptations	60
Theatrical	61
Comic Strip Format	63
Film	65
Song	66

## Chapter 2: The Story of Tum Teav..... 69

Introduction (stanzas 1-29) 69

Part 1 (30-138): Tum's and Teav's First Love and Separation 76

Part 2 (138-298): Tum's Sin 104

Part 3 (299-354): Tum's and Pech's Return to Tbong Kmom 144

Part 4 (355-391): Teav's Arranged Marriage To the Governor's Son 159

Part 5 (392-442): The Consummation of Tum's and Teav's Love 168

Part 6 (443-446): The Governor's Son's Courtship of Teav 181

Part 7 (447-531): Tum's Summoning By the King And Separation From Teav 183

Part 8 (532-628): Teav's Selection To Be a Concubine & Reunion with Tum 196

Part 9 (629-751): Teav's Mother's Trick And the Separation of Tum & Teav 221

Part 10 (752-884): The Wedding And Death of Tum and Teav 252

Part 11 (885-1044): The Punishment of Ah Chun & Teav's Mother 285

## Chapter 3: *Tum Teav* in Cambodian Literary Criticism .....326

Introduction 326

The Emergence of Cambodian Literary Criticism 326

Kambujasuriya 331

Literary Criticism on Tum Teav 341

The Authorship Controversy 342

Leang Hap An (1962) 342

Ouk Saman (1966) 345

Kong Somphea (1971) 353

Ministry of Education (1989) 357

Major Themes 361

Kim Set (1959) 363

Kim Sam Or (1961) 367

Leang Hap An (1962) 374

Ouk Saman (1966) 388

Saem Sur (1970) 405

Vandy Kaonn (1973) 410

## Chapter 4: Tum Teav Today .....416

Introduction 416

Tbong Kmom Today 419

Interviews 427

Short Biographies of Interviewees 428

Mr Pech Tum Kravel 429

Mr Hong Soth 432

Mr You Bo 435

Mrs Pal Vannarirak 437

Mrs Nimola Yim 438

Mrs Pol Pisey 439

Mr Sam Arth Va 440

Mr Sok Heang Oun 441

Mr Ven Sun 442

Mrs Sophany Oum 444

Venerable Sao Khon Thamteroa 445

Mr Youk Chhang 446

Interviewees' Viewpoints on Tum Teav 447

Buddhist Morality and Traditional Codes of Conduct 449

Abuse of Power 454

Justice 460

Conclusion: Tum Teav and Systems of Justice in Cambodia Today 466

Bibliography .....472

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## Chapter 1: The Importance of *Tum Teav*

### Introduction

*Tum Teav* is a tragic love story about a talented novice monk named Tum and a beautiful adolescent girl named Teav. There are numerous versions of the story that cover all the major modes of expression in Cambodian culture. In addition to oral versions, there are literary versions as well as modern adaptations of the story for Cambodian theater and film.<sup>1</sup> *Tum Teav* also appears in different historical texts, as it is generally believed that the characters described in the story are based on actual people and events in Cambodian history. The different versions of *Tum Teav* in various genres attest to the story's tremendous importance and popularity in Cambodian culture and society.<sup>2</sup>

*Tum Teav* is a cornerstone of the Cambodian literary canon and has been taught in Cambodian schools since 1957, the year Khmer literature was first introduced into the national curriculum after winning independence

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<sup>1</sup> *Tum Teav* was performed in July 1999 at the Chatamuk Theater in Phnom Penh just prior to my arrival in Cambodia doing research for this dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> The importance of *Tum Teav* has also been recognized by Western scholars of Cambodia. In addition to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century French scholars discussed in this chapter, the story has been of current interest to modern scholars of Cambodia. See for example Alex Hinton's article "A Head For an Eye: Revenge in the Cambodian Genocide" (*American Ethnologist* 25(3):352-377, 1998) in which Professor Hinton uses *Tum Teav* as a primary reference for trying to understand the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge.

from the French.<sup>3</sup> In 1958, it was stipulated that *Tum Teav* be taught in the country's schools and universities beginning at the secondary level. By the 1960s, *Tum Teav* was a central text in the Khmer literature curriculum for secondary schools.

In the third year class, *Tum Teav* was taught along with classical texts such as *The Reamker*.<sup>4</sup> These texts were used to illustrate the influences of Buddhism and Brahmanism in Cambodian literature.<sup>5</sup> In the first year curriculum, the story was studied along with the modern novel because of its realistic portrayal of everyday life in Cambodian society. The story's description of ancient Cambodian customs also demonstrates that it is a uniquely Cambodian product and not an adaptation of a foreign text. In 1965, the curriculum of Khmer literature was revised and many works were removed. *Tum Teav* was maintained in the curriculum, affirming its importance to Cambodian literature and cultural identity.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cambodia was a French Protectorate from 1863 until 1954.

<sup>4</sup> Along with texts such as *The Reamker*, *Tum Teav* is considered to be a classic of Cambodian literature. Unlike *The Reamker* however or other Khmer texts which have been adapted from Indian, Thai or Chinese works, *Tum Teav* is considered to be uniquely Khmer. Also, unlike other classical Khmer verse novels whose plots and characters generally deal with the supernatural, *Tum Teav* describes daily events in the lives of ordinary people. It provides a rare look at popular beliefs concerning marriage, as well as traditional rites of passage, particularly the monkhood for young men, and the custom of "entering the shade" prior to marriage for adolescent women.

<sup>5</sup> The two other categories of literature taught during that year were modern texts and aphorisms.

<sup>6</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:448-9.



By the 1960s, *Tum Teav* had become a topic of serious literary research and debate among Cambodian scholars. In 1960, the Khmer Writers Association, under the direction of Hel Somphea, traveled to Tbong Kmom to research the origin of the story and its basis in Cambodian history.<sup>7</sup> They met with supposed descendents of former slaves described in the story and were shown sites where episodes from the story were believed to have taken place, such as the place where Teav committed suicide.<sup>8</sup> A number of critical texts on *Tum Teav* were written in the 1960s as well. These scholarly texts that investigate the authenticity of different versions of the story, as well as other questions, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

### ***A Brief Summary of Tum Teav***

According to the story, a young novice monk Tum falls in love with a beautiful girl named Teav who lives in the town of Tbong Kmom in present day Kompong Cham province.<sup>9</sup> Being of marriageable age, Teav is “in the shade” as her mother tries to arrange her marriage to the Governor’s son Murn Guon.<sup>10</sup> Tum and Teav meet when Tum and Pech, a

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<sup>7</sup> The Khmer Writers Association was established in 1956. Hel Sumpha (1922-1971) was president of the Association from 1957 to 1964. During this time, Hel Sumpha also supervised law courses at the Faculté de Droit in Phnom Penh (Khing Hok Dy, 1993:70)

<sup>8</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:450.

<sup>9</sup> In 1930, Tbong Kmom became a *srok* in Kompong Cham. Prior to that date, Tbong Kmom was a separate province with its own administration (Thong Phan, 1976:56).

<sup>10</sup> Traditionally, when a girl reaches puberty, she is kept at home and taught the skills of housekeeping as her parents consider suitable marriage partners. The custom of a girl

fellow novice monk, travel by ox cart from their temple in Ba Phnom to Tbong Kmom in order to sell prayer tables called *taok*.<sup>11</sup> Because of Tum's handsome looks and talent for chanting, he quickly becomes the talk of the town. Teav's servant Noe hears Tum chant in the village center and returns to the house to inform Teav who entreats her mother to invite Tum to chant at their home. Out of curiosity, Teav's mother obliges her. Tum accepts the invitation and he and Teav fall in love at first sight. When Tum finishes chanting, Teav asks Noe to offer him a gift of tobacco and betel nut wrapped in a perfumed scarf called a "*pahom*" as a keepsake.

Tum and Pech return to their temple in Ba Phnom and ask the Abbot permission to disrobe. The Abbot is aware that Tum has fallen in love and after making some astrological calculations determines that it would be dangerous for Tum to disrobe at this time and that he should wait. As for Pech however the Abbot gives him permission to disrobe whenever he wishes after the end of the month. Determined to disrobe, Tum goes to his mother complaining of terrible stomach pain and persuades her to go to the temple on his behalf. The Abbot tells Tum's mother that Tum is pretending to be sick and that in truth he has fallen in love. Finally, Tum decides to defy the Abbot and disrobe without his permission. He goes into the forest and removes his monk's robes and changes into regular clothes,

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"entering the shade" was also a way to ensure her virtue and, so, not spoil her prospects for marriage.

<sup>11</sup> Khing Hok Dy states that this indicates that monks handled money and were engaged in the economy at that time, something that is not currently allowed.

a most serious offense of the rules of the monkhood. Tum, along with Pech who has already disrobed legally, departs for Tbong Kmom to rejoin Teav.

In Tbong Kmom, Tum and Pech stay at the house of their “adopted mother,” who happily welcomes them. The next day, Tum goes to see Teav whose mother happens to be at a temple ceremony. After he enters the house, Noe leaves them alone, and overcome with passion Tum and Teav make love. Later, as Tum is leaving the house, he meets Teav’s mother as she is returning home from the temple. Unaware of what has happened, she invites Tum to stay at the house. For several days, Tum and Teav secretly enjoy their love. Their romance is interrupted however when King Reamea upon learning of Tum’s and Pech’s musical talents sends a messenger to have them brought to live at the royal Palace in Lovek to join the royal orchestra.

Coincidentally, Teav is later selected by a royal delegation to be the King’s concubine. At this time, neither the King nor Teav’s mother is aware of the young lovers’ relationship. When Teav goes to live at the King’s Palace as a concubine, Teav’s mother forgoes her original intention to marry Teav to the Governor’s son satisfied that her daughter will be a member of the Royal Court instead. When Tum and Teav are reunited at the Palace however Tum improvises a song declaring that Teav is already his fiancé. Tum and Teav tell the King about their love, and he agrees to marry them. Learning of this unexpected turn of events, Teav’s mother resolves to take Teav away from Tum who is poor and offers no prospect

of wealth or status. She hastily renews the arrangements for Teav's marriage with the Governor's son and sends Teav a letter at the Palace saying she is very ill and that Teav must return to Tbong Kmom immediately.

When Teav arrives in Tbong Kmom, she realizes she's been tricked. As preparations are being made for her marriage with the Governor's son, she sends a letter to Tum telling him of her mother's ruse. Tum informs the King, who gives him an official letter stating that Tum and Teav are already married. During the course of Teav's marriage ceremony with the Governor's son, Tum arrives to rescue Teav, but he becomes drunk on wine and does not deliver the King's letter. The governor, Ah Chhun, orders his men to take Tum into the forest to be killed.<sup>12</sup> Later, Teav and Noe find Tum dead in the forest and take their own lives.

When the King hears that the Governor and Teav's mother have apparently disregarded his pronouncement of Tum's and Teav's marriage, he becomes enraged and goes to Tbong Kmom with his army. In Tbong Kmom, he orders his ministers to render judgment on those responsible for defying his authority. It is decided that Teav's mother and the Governor's

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<sup>12</sup> The title *Ah Chun* has been given to the Governor of Tbong Kmom since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Even though Tbong Kmom is no longer a separate province, the administrator of *srok* Tbong Kmom still has the title *Ah Chun* meaning "brilliant" in Sanskrit (Thong Phan, 1976:56).

family be buried alive and raked over with a metal harrow and that the population of Tbong Kmom become hereditary slaves.

### ***Different Versions of Tum Teav***

In this section, we will present different versions of *Tum Teav* from various genres. These include oral versions, as well as historical, literary and modern adaptations of the story for stage, film and song. Our purpose here is twofold. First, we intend to demonstrate the importance of *Tum Teav* in Cambodian culture and society. Second, we intend to provide some background on the controversy concerning the authorship of *Tum Teav* that is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Oral Versions***

The historical, literary and modern versions of *Tum Teav* trace their origin back to the oral versions of the story. These oral versions were performed by professional singers who traveled the Cambodian countryside during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> In the 1950s for example, a famous storyteller known as

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<sup>13</sup> We do not present all the literary versions of *Tum Teav* here. For a complete delineation of the different literary versions, including the oral versions of the story, refer to Thong Phan's 1976 thesis, "Etude Sur Dum-Dav: Roman Populaire Khmer," University de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III.

<sup>14</sup> The oral tradition is deeply rooted in Cambodian writing and society. Prior to the advent of Khmer printing and the promotion of literacy in the 20th century, Cambodian texts were typically recited. Stories were passed down orally from parents to children, from monks to the laity, from teachers to students, etc. Monks would recite stories describing the previous lives of the Buddha. Drama troupes would perform scenes from

Ta Krud inspired many listeners with his performances of the *Reamker*. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a woman named Sai-Pour recited *Tum Teav* to the accompaniment of a *chapi*, a long-necked two-string lute, in *srok sithor kandal* in Prey Veng province and many other places.<sup>15</sup> The fact that *Tum Teav* was part of the repertoire of stories recited by these traveling minstrels is a good indication of the story's importance in Cambodian society since at least the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The story's importance was clearly evident to Etienne Aymonier (1844-1929), the French naval man and epigrapher, who produced two translations of the oral versions. As a ranking administrator in the French Protectorate, Aymonier heard the story performed or recounted throughout Cambodia, with the notable exception of Tbong Kmom where the story

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the *Reamker*, the Khmer version of the Indian epic, *The Ramayana*. Minstrels would sing popular stories to the accompaniment of the *chapi*, a two-stringed lute.

The oral transmission of stories and texts helps to explain why verse was the predominant form of traditional Cambodian writing. The use of standard rhyme and meter patterns made the stories easier to remember and recite. The prevalent use of alliteration, assonance and mellifluous compounds in verse compositions indicates the emphasis that was placed on the sound of the language. Often, the sound more than the meaning of the verse determined the literary quality of the composition.

The perpetuation of the oral tradition was further instituted in Cambodian society by the physical limitations of the palm leaf texts themselves. The texts were not only very difficult and time consuming to produce. They were also susceptible to the ravages of the tropical weather and fire. Most texts were kept in local monasteries built of wood and thatch. Annual rains and accidental fires were responsible for the loss of many manuscripts and made it necessary to constantly recopy texts. The difficulty of reproducing the palm leaf text is one reason why few books were available. The scarcity of books limited literacy further and perpetuated the mutual dependency between speakers and listeners of the oral tradition.

<sup>15</sup> Kong Somphoa, *Botumthera Som: Writer of the 19th century*. Phnom Penh, 1971:16.

takes place. He made the first translation of the story at the request of Louis Delaporte, another member of the French administration, who had also heard it performed during his travels in the Cambodian countryside. He was so impressed with the story that he included Aymonier's translation in his *Voyage au Cambodge, Architecture khmère*, published in 1880.<sup>16</sup> Aymonier published his second translation of the story himself twenty year later.<sup>17</sup>

The oral versions of *Tum Teav* heard and recorded by Aymonier and Delaporte confirm that the story has been well known throughout Cambodia since at least the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Delaporte heard the story performed in the village of Beng-Mealea during a journey between Phnom Penh and Siemreap in 1873.<sup>18</sup> At the invitation of the village leader, Delaporte attended a Buddhist *Kathin* ceremony that was followed by a banquet and entertainment.<sup>19</sup> The banquet ended with a performance of *Tum Teav* that Delaporte listened to from beginning to end with the aid of an interpreter. A few years later, Delaporte asked Aymonier to produce

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<sup>16</sup> At this time, Delaporte was located in Saigon as part of the administration of the French Protectorate.

<sup>17</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:37.

<sup>18</sup> Delaporte was in Cambodia as chief of a mission for the French Ministry of Public Education. Previously, in 1865, Delaporte had been part of a mission under Doudart de Lagrée sent to find the source of the Mekong (Thong Phan, 1976:38).

<sup>19</sup> The *Kathin* ceremony takes place in the fall following the three month rain retreat and is an opportunity for the laity to offer monks new robes and other items.

the translation of the story that he included in his book *Voyage au Cambodge, Architecture khmère*.<sup>20</sup>

Etienne Aymonier arrived in Cambodia in 1869 as a member of the French navy. He held various posts and in 1873 was named the Adjunct Representative of the Protectorate in Phnom Penh. This position required Aymonier to travel throughout Cambodia and enabled him to pursue his study of Khmer by translating palm leaf manuscripts and temple inscriptions. In 1874, Aymonier supervised the instruction of Cambodians enrolled at the College of Administrator Training and was director of the college from 1877 to 1878, when he produced the first translation of *Tum Teav* for Delaporte's book.<sup>21</sup>

Aymonier was intrigued by the oral versions of *Tum Teav* that he had heard and attempted to investigate the source of the story by traveling to Tbong Kmom province in 1883.<sup>22</sup> The residents of Tbong Kmom told Aymonier that the story was true. Aymonier also learned that their resentment for being the descendants of hereditary slaves was the reason why it was strictly forbidden to tell the story in Tbong Kmom.<sup>23</sup> He also was shown the locations where events in the story were believed to have taken place. Because of the controversy surrounding the story and the fear

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<sup>20</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:41.

<sup>21</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:42-43.

<sup>22</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:43.

<sup>23</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:57. The June 17, 1884 convention abolished slavery in Cambodia.



of violence by the residents of Tbong Kmom to anyone who discussed the story, Aymonier was accompanied by French forces as he conducted his research, and his Cambodian guide was as discrete as possible while showing Aymonier the physical locations where events in the story were believed to have taken place.<sup>24</sup> Aymonier included the information he had gathered during his trip to Tbong Kmom to supplement his translation of *Tum Teav* included in his *Le Cambodge I, Le Royaume actuel*, published in 1900.<sup>25</sup>

Both Delaporte and Aymonier describe the story as a “drame historique” that depicts actual events in Cambodian history. Aymonier suggests two dates when the events in the story took place. In his *Cambodge I*, he dates the story in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He later modifies this date in his 1903 text *Cambodge III* to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of an unpopular monarch named King Rama.

The oral versions of *Tum Teav* that were published by Delaporte and Aymonier in 1880 and 1900 respectively describe similar characters and

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<sup>24</sup> Thong Phan states that there continues to be a stigma for residents of Tbong Kmom. Through the story of *Tum Teav*, Tbong Kmom has become associated with misdeeds and slavery so that all residents of Tbong Kmom are stereotyped as the descendents of slaves. Thon Phan suggests that the first authors of the literary versions of the story did not sign their names to their manuscripts in fear of residents of Tbong Kmom who would seek revenge (Thong Phan, 1976:62).

<sup>25</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:44. In his 1903 publication entitled *Cambodge III, Le groupe d'Angkor et l'histoire* published by Leroux, Aymonier included an essay on the dating of *Tum Teav*. The title of the story used by Aymonier was *Teav-Ek*.

events as the ones described in the brief outline of the story above based on the literary version of the story by Venerable Botumthera Som. There are however some notable exceptions. In the oral versions, the novice monk is named Ek instead of Tum. Another difference is that in the oral versions Tum and Teav are officially engaged before they are brought to the royal Palace, which is not the case in the literary version. Also, in the oral versions Ah Chun and his son are the ones who devise the trick to call Teav back from the royal Palace and convince Teav's mother to write the letter stating falsely that she is very ill. In the literary version, Teav's mother is the one who devises the ploy. In both the oral and literary versions, the King's punishment of Ah Chun and the others is the same.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Historical Versions***

As stated above, the events described in *Tum Teav* are believed to have taken place in Cambodian history and have been passed down over the centuries by storytellers. The names of provinces and towns described in the story do in fact exist, and the modern residents of Tbong Kmom have preserved items they believe to have belonged to Teav, the story's heroine.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:45-53.

<sup>27</sup> During my visit to Tbong Kmom, I was shown the Bodhi tree where it is believed that Tum was taken and killed. A man living nearby told me that a spirit lived in the tree. My trip to Tbong Kmom is described in detail in Chapter 4.

Despite popular belief however it is difficult to find empirical evidence to support the argument that the people and events described in the story are based on historical fact. The most convincing written evidence is the story's inclusion in Cambodian historical texts. In this section, we will consider two kinds of historical sources. The first is the Royal Chronicles, and the second is historical texts that use the Chronicles as a primary source. The three texts from this second group that we will consider are: Eng Soth's *Documents of Great Khmer Figures*, published in 1969; and the works of Mak Phoeun and Khin Sok, whose in-depth and highly researched works were published in French in 1981 and 1988, respectively. In addition to continuing to demonstrate *Tum Teav*'s importance in Cambodian culture and society, we intend to assess to what extent the story's inclusion in these historical texts adds to the credibility of its basis in historical truth.

### **The Royal Chronicles**

*Tum Teav* appears in two versions of the Cambodian historical documents known as the Royal Chronicles. The Chronicles are a disparate group of texts that trace the reigns of successive Cambodian kings back to their mythical origin.<sup>28</sup> The oldest existing Chronicle was written during the reign of King Ang Canda (1806-1834) in 1818. The most recent version

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<sup>28</sup> There are about thirty-two known versions of the Chronicles in various repositories in Cambodia and France, including copies and fragments. Since the Chronicles do not generally provide references to sources of information, we can only speculate just how *Tum Teav* came to be included in these two versions. Although written versions of the story existed at the time of their composition, it is not known if the writers of these later Chronicles based their versions on written or oral versions of the story.

was written in 1966, when Prince Norodom Sihanouk (1941-1970) was in power. In 1879, a legendary part that describes the mythical origin of Khmer kings was added to the original historical part of the Chronicles.<sup>29</sup> The versions that include both the legendary and historical parts are referred to as the complete versions.

In an attempt to clarify the historical validity of the Chronicles, contemporary historians make a distinction between the legendary part and historical part of the various versions. However, it is questionable just where the legendary part ends and the historical part begins, or what is historical and what is imaginative or legendary in the Chronicles as a whole. In the earliest known version drafted in 1818, there is only the historical part that begins with the reign of King Nibvan Pad in the 14th century. It was not until the version known as Vatt Kok Kak (KK) written 1879 during the reign of King Norodom that the legendary part first

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<sup>29</sup> The lineage of the legendary Khmer kings spans a period of nineteen centuries from Brah Thon to Ta Trasak, the father of King Nibvan Pad, who is the first king of the historical part. According to the legendary part of the Chronicles, the first Khmer king was Brah Thon, whose marriage to the daughter of the king of the Nagas led to the creation of Cambodia, when the Naga king drained the waters of the earth as a wedding gift to the newlyweds. Another important story in the legendary part concerns King Ketumala, the seventh king in the legendary genealogy, whose reign is said to have lasted four hundred years. King Ketumala is believed to be the son of the Hindu god Indra who sent Bisnukar from the heavens to build Angkor Wat for Ketumala.

Both of these legends continue to be passed on from generation to generation. There are references to the story of Brah Thon, for example, included in the traditional wedding ceremony in which the inclusion of a scarf represents Brah Thon's descent to the Naga world holding the border of the scarf of the Naga princess. The legend of Ketumala is told in the 17th century poem, *Lpoek Angkar*, and was told to Westerners to explain the building of the temple.

appeared tracing King Nibvan Pad's royal lineage to its mythical origins in the 5th century BC.<sup>30</sup> For this reason, this KK is considered to be the first complete version of the Chronicles.

The etymology of the Khmer word for the Chronicles, *bansavatara*, describes their primary function. *Bansavatara* is a Sanskrit word composed of the roots *vança* and *ava-tara*. *Vança* means offspring or issue, and *ava-tara* means descendant or incarnation.<sup>31</sup> Thus, *bansavatara*, could be translated as "the lineage of (Khmer) kings." The Chronicles present "the history of Cambodia" in the sense that they trace the past in terms of the successive reigns of Cambodian monarchs. Thus, the primary task of the Palace functionaries or monks who drafted the Chronicles was to record the reign of a particular king and to affirm his place in the royal lineage.<sup>32</sup> In doing this, the writers praised the reputation of their monarch in the most glowing terms. As such, the Chronicles were

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<sup>30</sup> Subsequently, in 1878, in a version known as Vatta Sitpur (SP), a more detailed account of the legendary part appeared written by the son of King Ang Duong, Prince Nabvaratn. In both versions the legendary part begins with the Buddha's prediction about Cambodia followed by accounts of the Cham kings and first Khmer kings. Prince Nabvaratn's account of the legendary part, written fifteen years after the establishment of the French protectorate in Cambodia, became the model for subsequent versions. Not only is his version more detailed, it also shows a greater concern for accuracy in presenting the genealogy of successive kings. Although he lists the main sources used in compiling the information, these sources have not been successfully traced (Khin Sok. *Chroniques Royales Du Cambodge (de Bañā Yai à la Prise de Lanvaek) de 1417-1595*. Paris: EFEO, 1988:11).

<sup>31</sup> Khin Sok, 1988:1

<sup>32</sup> Mak Phoeun. *Chroniques Royales Du Cambodge (Des origines légendaires jusqu'à Paramaraja I)*. Paris:EFEO, 1984:1.

not “historical” in a Western sense. That is, the writers were not necessarily obliged to support their accounts with empirical evidence. Indeed, there are many inconsistencies concerning dates and names in the different versions. Nonetheless, the Chronicles remain the primary source for piecing together Cambodian history up to the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup>

*Tum Teav* appears in two of the later versions of the Chronicles. The first version is actually a fragment whose date of composition and author are not known. It was copied in 1916 by L'École Française D'Extrême-Orient and referred to by the number P57.<sup>34</sup> The original fragment was found in Phnom Penh by the French explorer Edouard Huber who had traveled to Indochina for the first time in 1901 and died there in 1914. The original was copied in two volumes and kept at the Bibliothèque de L'École

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<sup>33</sup> With few other sources available, historians interested in studying Cambodia's Dark Age (between the 15th and 19th centuries) have relied on the Chronicles particularly for information on past kings and their reigns. Such was the case, for example, with the French scholar Adhémar Leclère whose *Histoire du Cambodge Depuis le 1er Siècle de Notre Ère* appeared in 1914. The same is true for Khmer scholars such as Eng Soth, Mak Phoeun and Khin Sok, whose historical texts are discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

<sup>34</sup> P57 has two volumes. The first volume is a copy of fascicule V of the original that covers the period from 1557, prior to the fall of Lovek in 1594, to 1608, during the reign of Sri Suriyobarn Paramaraja VII (1602-1618). The second volume of P57 is a copy of fascicule VI of the original, which begins in 1635 with the death of Cau Bana Tu Sri Dhammaraja I (1627-1631) and ends in 1802. The original fragment is missing the period from 1608 to 1635.) *Tum Teav* begins on page seventeen of fascicule VI. (See Khin, Sok. *Chroniques Royales Du Cambodge (De Bañā Yat A La Prise de Lanvaek) (1417 à 1595)*. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1988:25.)

Française D'Extrême-Orient in Paris.<sup>35</sup> The first volume of P57 covers the period from 1557, prior to the fall of Lovek in 1594, to 1608, during the reign of Sri Suriyobarn Paramaraja VII (1602-1618). The second volume of P57 begins in 1631 with the death of Cau Bana Tu Sri Dhammaraja I (1627-1631) and ends in 1802.

*Tum Teav* appears on page seventeen of the second volume of P57 as part of the account of the reign of King Reamea (1641-1656), whose royal capital was located at Oudong.<sup>36</sup> According to P57, King Reamea took the throne in 1641, after having his uncle and cousin assassinated. He was an unpopular king who converted from Buddhism to Islam and committed crimes against foreigners and his own people. He died in 1656 after being taken prisoner by the Vietnamese.<sup>37</sup>

The author of P57 states that the tragic events described in *Tum Teav* took place in 1654 near the end of King Reamea's reign. The following is a translation of Mak Phoeun's French translation of the story from P57:

His Majesty Rama Thipadei had two pages that he held in great affection. One was named Murn Ek, who was a singer. The other, named Pech, who knew how to play the flute. They pleased the King and would perform and sing for him every night.

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<sup>35</sup> Mak, Phoeun. *Chroniques Royales Du Cambodge (de 1594 à 1677)*. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1981:8.

<sup>36</sup> After 1903, the successive reigns of individual kings organized by chapter, and an attempt is made to account for the sources of information used in the text (Khin, 1988:8).

<sup>37</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:76.

One day, the royal servants who had gone to search for beautiful women to be royal concubines escorted Teav from the province of Tbong Kmom to offer to the King. Then Murn Ek bowed before the King and said:

"Teav is the fiancée of your servant. We joined our hearts when Teav was "in the shade." That is, when your servant was a novice monk."

Having heard that, the King asked Teav, and she confirmed that Murn Ek was truly her fiancé. Then, the King detached himself from Teav. He had them bow before him and married Teav to Murn Ek.

The news reached Achun, the governor of Tbong Kmom province. He called the parents of Teav and told them:

"Previously, I had asked for the hand of Teav to be the wife of Murn Amrik Snaihar, who is my son. Preparations for the marriage ceremonies were ready when the King's servants came and chose Teav to take her to the King. Now, the King doesn't love her: He gave her to be the wife of Murn Ek, who is a man without lineage. Thus, you must write a letter to tell Teav that you are sick, and that she must return home. We will get prepared for the marriage celebration, so she can marry Murn Amrik Snaihar. You will be famous, being related to our family."

The parents of Teav composed a letter according to Achun's orders. They offered it to Achun who ordered his servants to embark on a boat and deliver the letter to Teav.

Understanding that her parents were very sick, and so, unable to remain any longer with her husband, Teav went before the King and bowed to take leave.

When she arrived in the province of Tbong Kmom, she didn't see her parents sick like the letter said. She immediately saw that they were in the process of making the cakes in preparation for the marriage.



Teav was very upset. She could not go back because Achun had her under close guard, so she ordered a servant to return to inform Murn Ek.

Having learned of this, Murn Ek entered and bowed before the King to inform him of what had happened. Hearing the news, the King became furious. He ordered that a royal edict be drafted and gave it to Tum so he could go and tell Achun to stop the wedding.

When Murn Ek arrived, he found Achun in the process of celebrating the wedding of Murn Amrik Snaihar and Teav. Seeing that Murn Ek had arrived, Teav left and went to Murn Ek in view of Achun. Seeing this, Achun seized Murn Ek and had him put to death, violating the royal decree carried by Murn Ek.

Then Teav and Miss Noe, who was Teav's servant, fled and committed suicide together.

Having seen Achun seized and put to death Murn Ek, his friend, Murn Pech fled to go inform the King who became extremely angry.

In 1016 of the Culla era, the Year of the Horse, sixth of the decade (=1654/5 A.D.), the King led his four ministers and his soldiers to embark on a voyage to Tbong Kmom. Thereafter, the King ordered the arrests of Achun, as well as Murn Amrik Snaehar Dumm, and the parents of Teav, and had them all executed. Then the King had the members of the family of Achun and Teav's parents, along with the people that were closely involved in the marriage arrangements, made slaves. Then the King ordered:

"From now on, the residents of the province of Tbong Kmom must pay, once every three years, a tax on the number of carts from the profit of Achun."

This is why there were more slaves in the province of Tbong Kmom.

Having thus punished the people who had committed treason and were the accomplices of Achun, the King led his troops to return in a military procession to the royal Palace.<sup>38</sup>

*Tum Teav* also appears in another version of the Chronicles entitled *Brah raja bansavatara*. This is a complete version of the Chronicles better known as Vatta Dik Vil (DV), after the name of the temple where it was produced. DV was completed in 1941 by order of the temple's Abbot, Venerable Has Suk, and is kept at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh. It is based on earlier drafts of DV composed during the reigns of King Norodom (1860-1904) and King Sisowath (1904-1927). DV begins with the legendary King Brah Thon, whose marriage to the Naga princess led to the creation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and continues to the middle of the 17th century, with each chapter corresponding to the reign of a different king.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Mak Phoeun, 1981:431-433.

<sup>39</sup> Even at their most basic level however, the Chronicles do not define the Khmer solely in terms of the monarchy. Indeed, both the production of the text itself and the reputation of Khmer monarchs it affirms are linked to Buddhism. In the version of the Chronicles known as Vatta Dik Vil, drafted in 1941 by the Abbot of that temple, Venerable Has Suk, the interrelation between Buddhism and the monarchy can be seen in the following excerpt in which the Venerable expresses his gratitude to the Khmer kings for bringing Buddhism to Cambodia: "These good actions are without end and could never compare to some object. It is for them [the Khmer kings]... that I [produced] thirty-two volumes of the revered Royal Chronicles... in order to conserve it as a testimony of my respect and as a remembrance of their good deeds" (Mak Phoeun, 1981:32).

Indeed, prominent scholars such as the French-trained Cambodian linguist Saveros Pou see the influence of Buddhism as a defining feature of Khmer literature. In "Études Ramakertiennes," for example, Pou analyzes the character of the epic's hero King Rama and various events in the story in terms of Buddhist concepts. Moreover, she argues that the influence of Rama in Cambodian culture is comparable to that of the Buddha. The

The kind of information presented in DV suggests that the writers were not especially constrained by expectations for historical accuracy. Along with details of war treaties and civil and military functionaries, DV provides details that would probably not have been available, such as the number of dead and wounded in battles that had occurred centuries before.<sup>40</sup> In addition, dates are often in disagreement in the historical part and not plausible in the legendary part.<sup>41</sup>

*Tum Teav* appears in DV in the chapter on King Reamea Thipadi (1568-1579) whose royal capital was located at Lovek. Unlike King Reamea (1641-1656) from P57, King Reamea Thipadi is depicted as a compassionate and devout monarch.<sup>42</sup>

My English translation of Khin Sok's French translation of *Tum Teav* in DV, t.XVIII, p16+, follows:

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recognition of his importance, she says, is inscribed in the suffix, "kerti," of the epic's title, *Ramakerti*. Meaning "glory" or "reputation," "kerti" is seen by the Khmer as a function of one's past actions as governed by the tenets of the Buddhist Dhamma or Law. For Pou, the text illustrates the popular belief that Rama's renown is a result of his exemplary conduct in previous lives, and the glorification of his reputation follows the Buddhist practice of praising right action (Pou, Saveros. "Études Ramakertiennes" in *Seksa Khmer*. Paris: CEDORECK, 1981).

<sup>40</sup> Khin Sok, 1988:23.

<sup>41</sup> Khin Sok, 1988:22.

<sup>42</sup> Reamea or Rama was the name of several Cambodian kings.

"In the province of Tbong Kmom, there were two persons named Aek and Dum. Min Aek was a famous singer and Min Dum a renowned flute player. A widow named Dan, had a daughter called Dav. She was known for her beauty. She lived in the village of Bodhi Joen Khal (village of Khum of Mon Riev, srok of Tpun Ghum, province of Kamban Cam) of the province of Thpun Ghmum; Miss Dav was betrothed to Min Aek because he was a famous singer and their parents had accepted their union, since they were still children. One day Min Ju, son of Cau Bana Arjun Jai, was walking with his friends in the village of Bodhi Joen Khal; attracted by the beauty of Miss Dav, he fell in love with her. He returned home and talked to his parents. The latter sent a go-between to the home of Nan Dan' to ask the hand of Miss Dav. The widow Dan' gave her consent, but her daughter refused because she was in love with Min Aek.

"When S.M., the exalted master, had learned that Dum and Aek were famous for their singing and flute playing, he ordered the director of music to go looking for these two persons to play music and sing to him permanently. The King had a great affection for the both of them.

"One day, the King ordered Ukña Vamn to send his servants to the provinces in search of the most beautiful girls. At this moment, Brah Amritasneha Kaev said to the King: 'There is a pretty flower named Dav, daughter of the widow Dan, she lives in the village of Bodhi Joen Khal in the province of Tpun Ghmum.'

"Having heard that, the King was delighted and ordered Ukña Vamn to send a message to Cau Baña Arjun, governor of the province of Tpun Ghmum. After having read the message, Cau Baña Arjun ordered his servants to accompany Nan Dav, her servant Nan Nu and the widow Dan to Ukña Vamn who escorted them to the King. His Majesty acknowledged that Nan Dav was very beautiful. At this moment, Min Aek sang to the King that Nan dav was his fiancée. S.M. asked Dav to respond to the words of Min Aek. She answered him affirmatively. The King then ordered Ukña Maha Mantri and Maha Debva to prepare the marriage ceremony of Min Aek and Nan Dav.

"As for the widow Dan, she was very ambitious and wanted her daughter to marry the King, when unfortunately she was only the wife of a singer. She took recourse in a ruse in order to be able to marry Dav

to Min Ju, the son of Arjun, the governor of the province of Tpun Ghmum who was extremely rich.

"The widow Dan' and the Governor agreed to unite Dav and Min Ju. The widow sent a letter to Dav, who was at the citadel of Lanvaek, telling her that she was seriously sick. Having received the letter, Nan Dav was very upset; Min Aek, her spouse, accompanied his wife and Nan Nu, her servant, up to the embankment. When they arrived at Bodhi joen Khal, Nan Dav was very surprised to see preparations for a wedding and that her mother was not sick. Then she understood that it was a ruse. Her mother forced her to marry Min Ju; she refused and preferred to die quickly than to marry the son of the Governor.

"The first day of the crescent moon, of the month of Phalguna, in the year of the Naga, third of the decade, (the year of the Naga always carries the same number of the decade), Nan Dav ordered a confidant to carry a letter to her spouse, who showed it to the King. When he understood the matter, the King became enraged and ordered his secretary to draft a message in which he ordered Cau Baña Arjun to turn over Nan Dav to Min Aek, since they had already been married for three months.

"The third day of the crescent moon, of the month of Phalguna, Min Aek arrived at Bodhy Joen Khal. He found everyone at a banquet and entered the house. Min Aek started to sing, asking for bétel from Nan Dav, and Min Dum started to play his flute. Cau Baña Arjun became angry and ordered his servants to capture Min Aek and to put him to death in a field behind the house; Nan Dav and Nan Nu fled and arrived at the place where Aek had been killed, then the two women committed suicide.

"After the killing of Min Aek, the royal message was found on a mat inside the house. All the participants at the ceremony were very worried. When Min Dum had learned that Aek had been killed, he fled, walking day and night toward the citadel of Lanvaek in order to relate the story to the King. S.M. became angry and said: 'This traitor is very insolent, he will be punished to the full extent, along with the guests to the wedding.' This said, the King ordered war boats to be prepared. Then he left for Bohdi Joen Khal, followed by his ministers and soldiers.

"That night, having learned that Nan Dav had disappeared from the house of the widow Dan' and that she was dead with Min Aek, the guests left to their own homes.

"Arrived at Bodhi Joen Khal, the King ordered his soldiers to bury alive Cau Baña Arjun and his family, as well as the parents up to the seventh degree. In addition, the entire population of the village were made slaves. Each would have to pay annually a bundle of *sapeques* and a *tau* (15kg) of rice to the Governor. Finally, S.M. ordered to lower the title of the five governors of the region of Cau Baña to Ukña, for they had shown themselves to be ingrates. Then the King returned to the capital of Lanvaek in 2112 of the Buddhist era, 1569 of the Christian era, 1491 of the Great Era, 931 of the Culla era, (2112 of the Buddhist era corresponds to the other dates given)."<sup>43</sup>

## Eng Soth

The first Cambodian to produce a western-style history of Cambodia was Eng Soth, whose *Documents of Great Khmer Figures* was published in 1969. Eng Soth based his text on a personal copy of the Chronicle DV.<sup>44</sup> He also referred to other versions of the Chronicles, primarily *Brah raja banscatara krun Kambujadhipati*, commonly known as "Vamn Juon" (VJ).<sup>45</sup> *Tum Teav* appears in *Documents of Great Khmer Figures* in the

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<sup>43</sup> Khin Sok, 1988. p327-330.

<sup>44</sup> Eng Soth's copy of DV is missing volume XVII of the original (Khin Sok, 1988:21-2).

<sup>45</sup> Khin Sok, 1988:31. Vamn Juon also headed the commission that produced an earlier version known as P63. In 1903, King Norodom ordered the commission to draft a new version of the Chronicles; however, the project was discontinued the following year when King Norodom died (Khin, 1988:16). The project was completed some ten years later under a different commission. The text of P63 is currently located in France at BEFEO. The features of P63 are significantly different from previous versions. First of all, it omits the Buddha's prediction and the lineage of Cham kings and begins instead with the Khmer kings. Further, the date of the first Khmer king's accession to the throne corresponds with year one of the Christian era. The omission of Buddha's prediction and

chapter that deals with the reign of King Reamea Thipadei (1568-1579), when the royal capital was located at Lovek. Eng Soth made some minor changes to the passage of *Tum Teav* from DV. (Please see the translation above.) For example, the name of Tum's friend is changed to "Pech."<sup>46</sup>

Two questions we are concerned with here are: To what extent does the inclusion of *Tum Teav* in Eng Soth's text add to the credibility of the story's historical basis? And, does Eng Soth's use of the Chronicles as a basis affirm the historical validity of his *Documents of Great Khmer Figures*? To pursue these questions we will consider previous uses of the Chronicles by French historians.

Vamn Juon (VJ), one of the primary sources used by Eng Soth, was initially drafted in 1929 during the reign of King Monivong with the support of the French. The French were directly involved in the production of VJ in two important ways. First, the commission that King Monivong charged to draft the text included the French Résident Superior M.F. Lavit.<sup>47</sup> The second instance of French involvement concerns King

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the use of the Christian calendar bring up the question of French influence (Mak Phoeun, 1984:4). In addition to marking the first reign of the Khmer royal lineage with the start of the Christian era, the name of each month appears in French translation. French influence can be seen in the format of P63 as well. The text is organized such that beginning with the fourth volume each chapter is named after a particular king, and the events described during each reign are more clear and detailed than previous versions.

<sup>46</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:80.

<sup>47</sup> M.F. Lavit was Resident Superior of Cambodia from 1929 to 1932 (Khin Sok, 1988:17).

Monivong's desire to print VJ. In 1928, the King sent a letter to the Résident Supérieur expressing his wish to print the text. In 1934, he sent a second request apparently after the initial draft was revised.<sup>48</sup> Unlike previous versions of the Chronicles that were written on palm leaf manuscripts, VJ was the first original version considered for printing.<sup>49</sup>

French interest in the Chronicles began towards the end of the 19th century as part of an attempt to determine the history of the building of the Angkor temples. This was the objective for example of the French academic and administrator Doudart de Lagrée who published the first Western translation of the Chronicles. The translation, entitled *Histoire d'un centenaire: roi du Cambodge*, along with copies of the original text, were

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<sup>48</sup> Khin Sok, 1988:17

<sup>49</sup> The opposition to printing in general was initially centered around the printing of Khmer sacred texts, particularly the *Tripitika*. The printing of religious texts was prohibited by traditionalist monks until the 1920s when Venerables Chuon Nhat and Huot That, with the aid of the director of the EFEO, Louis Finot, were able to overcome this opposition. (See *South-East Asia: Languages and Literatures: a select guide*, Patricia Herber & Anthony Milner (eds), 1989:54.) Perhaps the opposition to the printing was based on the view that mass production of the texts would detract from their sacred value. This is because much of the merit earned by venerating the Buddha comes from the performance of the act itself. The act of bowing before the altar and repeating standard phrases of respect is the act's source of earning merit. Often what is said is not as important as the act of saying something in an appropriate way. In terms of writing, the act of copying the sacred texts of the *Tripitika* was an especially important way of demonstrating respect for the Buddha's teaching. The careful engraving of specially treated palm leaf manuscripts with steel-tipped pens and proper ink to produce the texts was an integral part of the process. To mass-produce the texts would of course obviate this performative aspect of religious veneration. Given the deified identity of the Khmer monarch, this view of printing would have also applied to the production of the Chronicles.



deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale and Bibliothèque de la Société Asiatique in Paris. Subsequently, F. Garnier's translated the 1818 version of the Chronicles, supplying missing information and elaborating on the truncated syntax of the Khmer.<sup>50</sup>

In 1883, J. Moura's two-volume text, *Royaume du Cambodge*, appeared. Moura used one of the later "complete versions" and supplemented his translation with personal reflections. Moura went further than either de Lagrée or Garnier in adapting and transforming the original Khmer text. The skill with which they did this however is questionable, especially with Moura who states in his introduction that the original Chronicle was in Pali though no such version exists.

With the appearance of E. Aymonier's *Le Cambodge* in 1904, French efforts to assimilate the Chronicles into a historical discourse in keeping with Western expectations became more sophisticated. Unlike the earlier French studies described above, which he saw as having little historic value, Aymonier's analysis compares the Chronicles with foreign documents in an attempt to verify the historic events presented in the Khmer text. In the same year G. Maspéro's *Empire Khmer* appeared with its copious notes and commentaries supplementing the information derived from the Chronicles. Then in 1914, *Histoire du Cambodge* by A. Leclère was published. Leclère's study uses legends and inscriptions in addition to

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<sup>50</sup> In 1871 & 1872 Garnier's "Chronique royale du Cambodge" was published in *Journal Asiatique*.

the Chronicles and other historical documents and remains one of the most comprehensive studies of that period. It also assimilated the Chronicles into Western historical discourse more than any previous work.

Returning to Eng Soth's *Documents of Great Khmer Figures*, we find that it is not "historical" in the Western sense described above. That is, it does not make a critical analysis of the Chronicles or systematically compare the different versions in an attempt to determine the historical validity of particular dates and events. Instead, as the title suggests, Eng Soth's text was designed to appeal to a general reading public. It is perhaps a more "literary" than "historical" text. *Documents of Great Khmer Figures*, along with the passage of *Tum Teav*, might well be described as "historical fiction."<sup>51</sup>

### **Mak Phoeun**

The French-educated Cambodian historian Mak Phoeun included the passage of *Tum Teav* from P57 in his text, *Chroniques Royales Du Cambodge (De 1594 à 1677)*. Mak Phoeun used the 1929 version of the Chronicles known as Vamn Juon (VJ) as the basis for his study and supplemented each chapter with additional information from other Chronicles referred to in footnotes. The passage of *Tum Teav* from P57

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<sup>51</sup> An earlier example of historical literature was published in the monthly journal of the Buddhist Institute in Phnom Penh, *Kambujasuriya*. For a continuous period of over twenty years, it published in serial form a Chinese historical text entitled "The History of Samkak" translated by Nou Kan, the author of *Teav Ek*. The first segment appeared in 1948 and was introduced by Gnok Them, a former monk and editor of the publication's literary section.

appears in the chapter dedicated to King Réaméa Thipadei, who reigned Cambodia between 1638 and 1655. Unlike Eng Soth, Mak Phoeun uses the Chronicles in a more critical and scholarly way, making comparisons between different versions in order to determine the most reasonable chronology of events.

Mak Phoeun included the passage of *Tum Teav* from P57 in the chapter on King Reamea Thipadei in VJ because the chapter corresponds to the one on King Reamea in P57.<sup>52</sup> The chapter on King Reamea Thipadei states that he took the throne in 1638, after he had his uncle and cousin killed. In 1644, he took a voyage and fell in love with a Malay woman, whom he saw along the bank of a river. He made the woman his concubine and subsequently converted to Islam. The Royal Court was ordered to convert as well. King Réaméa Thipadei's reign came to a violent end when his two cousins tried to avenge their father's and brother's deaths by recruiting the help of factions of the Royal Court who were unhappy with the King's conversion to Islam and renouncing of Buddhism. To bolster their forces, the cousins sought the help of Vietnamese troops that were all too eager for an opportunity to enter Cambodia. King Réaméa Thipadei was soundly defeated in the battle that ensued and died while being held prisoner by the Vietnamese.

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<sup>52</sup> Personal correspondence with Mak Phoeun.

The passage of *Tum Teav* from P57 appears in the chapter on King Reamea Thipadei after his conversion to Islam. The plot and characters in P57's version of *Tum Teav* are similar to those in the literary versions of the story. However, there is no similarity between the King in *Tum Teav* and the King Reama in either P57 or VJ. In *Tum Teav*, there is no mention of a Malay concubine, and the King is clearly Buddhist. There is no information other than the name of the monarch to link King Reamea Thipadei in VJ with the King in *Tum Teav*.<sup>53</sup> While Mak Phoeun's scholarly use of the Chronicles makes every effort to establish the facts of Cambodian history during this period, the inconsistency between the King in *Tum Teav* and the King in the Chronicles where the story appears underlines the difficulty in determining the historical basis of *Tum Teav*.

### **Khin Sok**

Khin Sok, another French-educated Cambodian historian, included the passage of *Tum Teav* from DV in his text, *Chroniques Royales Du Cambodge De Bañā Yat A LA Prise De Lanvaek* (de 1417 à 1595). As with Mak Phoeun, Khin Sok used the 1929 version of the Chronicles known as Vamn Juon (VJ) as the basis for his study and supplemented each chapter with additional information from other Chronicles referred to in footnotes. In Khin Sok's text, the passage of *Tum Teav* from DV appears in the chapter on King Paramaraja, who ruled Cambodia between

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<sup>53</sup> Thong Phan suggests that the author of P57 may have included the story here because of the king's unpopularity (Thong Phan, 1976:108).

1568 and 1579 and whose royal capital was at Lovek.<sup>54</sup> Unlike the chapter on King Reamea Thipadei, where *Tum Teav* is placed in Mak Phoeun's text, there are definite similarities between the story and the account of King Paramaraja's reign.

The chapter on King Paramaraja in VJ states that Paramaraja succeeded his father as king at Lovek in 1568, when Cambodia was constantly at war with its neighbors, Siam and Laos. In a battle with Siam, the village of Tbong Kmom is mentioned as contributing to the 40,000 troops which pursued the Siamese forces as far as Ayudhya. In 1572, King Paramaraja moved to Nagara Vatta, leaving his son in charge at the royal Palace in Lovek. Laos tried to capitalize on Cambodia's drained resources and challenged the Kingdom of Cambodia to a joust on white elephants, the loser of which would become a vassal state of the victor. Although Laos was defeated, the Lao king refused to accept the terms of the agreement and attacked Cambodia. King Paramaraja's governors in the outer provinces, including one named Ah Chun, the same name as in *Tum Teav*, refused to enter into battle. Despite this, King Paramaraja was able to summon sufficient forces to soundly beat the Lao army and force them to retreat. In 1578, in a final battle with Laos, King Paramaraja defeated the

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<sup>54</sup> The story appears in Khin Sok's text in the appendix as a footnote to paragraph 40 that mentions Tbong Kmom as one of the villages where Laos prisoners were taken. The story of *Tum Teav* recounted in the footnote is a translation of the chronicle fragment known as Vatt Dik Vil (DV) located at the monastery of Kompong Tralach Krom and originally written in 1941. The version of DV used in Khin's text is located at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh. Another copy of the original is part of the personal collection of Eng Soth.

Lao army and brought captured Lao families to live in Cambodian villages, including Tbong Kmom. In 1579, King Paramaraja fell ill and died and was succeeded by his son, Satha Mohinda Réachéa (1579-1595), whose reign ended with the fall of Lovek to the Siamese.

The reference to *Tum Teav* from DV appears in the chapter after King Paramaraja's defeat of the Laotian forces and installation of Laotian families in Cambodia. The plot and characters in *Tum Teav* from DV are similar to those in the literary versions of the story. In this case, there are some general similarities between the events in the story and those in the chapter about King Paramaraja. In both accounts, the royal capital is located at Lovek, and the town of Tbong Kmom is mentioned. Another similarity is the existence of a governor by the name of Ah Chhun, who, in both accounts, does not cooperate with the King. In *Tum Teav*, Governor Ah Chhun does not acknowledge the King's marriage of Tum and Teav, and in the chapter on King Paramaraja, a governor by the same name does not comply with the King's order to oppose the Laos forces.

Regarding the village of Tbong Kmom, in *Tum Teav*, the residents of the village are made hereditary slaves as punishment for their participation with Ah Chhun. In the chapter on King Paramaraja, families of the defeated Lao army are relocated in Tbong Kmom to live presumably as outcasts. Finally, in both accounts there is the theme of betrayal and trickery. In *Tum Teav*, there is the ruse of Teav's mother to get Teav to leave Tum and return to Tbong Kmom. In the chapter on King Paramaraja,

there is the scheme of the Lao king to make Cambodia a vassal state by challenging Cambodia to a joust under false pretenses.

In conclusion, we find that the inclusion of *Tum Teav* does not provide conclusive evidence of the story's basis on historical truth. In each of the cases discussed above, there is no compelling rationale to support the story's association with a particular Cambodian king. Indeed, the story's basis in historical fact is a matter of conjecture.

### ***The Place of Tum Teav in the Cambodian Literary Canon***

Locating *Tum Teav* in the Cambodian literary canon poses similar difficulties as locating the story in Cambodian history. While scholars have defined Cambodian literary categories, designating a given text to a particular category is often problematic. Broad classifications such as "religious literature," "didactic literature," or "epic literature" have been used to organize traditional texts, but many texts fall just as well into a number of categories. *The Reamker* is a prime example. On the one hand, it is a religious epic. At the same time, the story is meant to entertain and to teach. Because of this ambiguity and its tremendous importance in Cambodian culture, the *Reamker* is typically placed a category of its own. But the *Reamker* is not so much an exception to the rule as an example of the difficulty of locating Cambodian texts in distinct literary genres.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> One explanation for this difficulty has to do with Western assumptions of literature and its production. Like most Cambodian art forms, such as the ancient architecture, court

Prior to the twentieth century, Cambodian literary works were referred to by generic terms for texts, such as *sastra* or *krang*, and not by typical Western literary categories like "fiction," "romance," "adventure," etc.<sup>56</sup> It was not until the 1930s that a term for "Cambodian literature" came into use in Cambodia and Western-style literary institutions began to emerge from traditional Buddhist and monarchal institutions.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps the most influential of these was the Buddhist Institute that led the process of

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dance and music, Cambodian literary writing has been closely associated with Buddhist and monarchal institutions. The majority of traditional literary texts were written by monks or princes aligned with the monastery or the Royal Court. They were not written for the publishing houses or academies that for centuries have sponsored Western literary production and defined literary genres.

<sup>56</sup> *Sastra* refers to documents written on palm leaves. *Krang* are scrolls or ancient parchment books folded into several sections" (Headley, Robert K. et al. *Cambodian-English Dictionary*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1977:82 & 1131).

<sup>57</sup> With the establishment of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient in 1901, French academic study of things Khmer was formalized in Cambodia. In the process of considering Khmer writing, however, French academics found little which they considered "literary." The repeated use of stock heroes and repetition of familiar settings and story lines based on the previous lives of the Buddha, led these French scholars to conclude that Khmer literature lacked the brilliance and originality which they found in the temple architecture. In the words of the French Abbot and scholar, Joseph Guesdon, "toute la littérature khmère n'étant qu'une suite des poèmes sur les vies du Buddha" [all Khmer literature is only a sequence of poems about the life of the Buddha]. (Guesdon, Joseph. "La littérature khmère et le Bouddhisme" in *Anthropos*, 1906: p94.)

Earlier published studies of Khmer literature by the French were made by Aymonier (1878), Moura (1883), Taupin (1886), Leclère (1895) and Pavie (1898).



defining and cataloguing Cambodian texts according to genres such as "religious texts," "epic texts," etc., listed above.<sup>58</sup>

The emergence of the modern novel in the 1940s and 1950s, along with 20th century Western-style Cambodian literary institutions such as the Buddhist Institute, produced a new category of Cambodian writing that was distinctly different from the traditional works that preceded it. Although Buddhism and the monarchy continued to influence this writing in a fundamental way, the differences between traditional and modern Cambodian writing have provided literary scholars with two broad, yet clearly different, categories by which to organize literary texts.

Khing Hok Dy, the preeminent Cambodian literary scholar, chose to divide his extensive survey of Cambodian literature into two volumes, the first dealing with the traditional works produced between the 15th and the 19th centuries, and the second dealing with the 20th century. Similarly, Judith Jacob, the accomplished British scholar, recently published a text that deals with "the traditional literature of Cambodia."<sup>59</sup> If the distinctions between the categories of texts within traditional Cambodian literature are

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<sup>58</sup> See, for example, the cataloging work of Nhok Thaem in the Buddhist Institutes publications of *Kambujasuriya*, No.8, 1965; No.2, 1966; and No.1, 1967.

<sup>59</sup> In 1990 and 1993 respectively, Khing Hoc Dy published his extensive compilations of classical and contemporary texts. Then in 1996, Judith Jacob completed her important delineation of the classical canon. Khing Hoc Dy. *Contribution à l'histoire de la littérature khmère* vol 1 & 2. Paris: L'Harmattan. 1990 & 1993. Jacob, Judith. *The Traditional Literature of Cambodia: a preliminary guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

ambiguous, the clear difference between traditional and modern writing marks a shift in the production of Cambodian literature and the way texts are organized.

The biggest difference between traditional and modern Cambodian writing concerns form. The form of traditional texts, whether religious, epic, didactic or works for pleasure, is verse. Prior to the emergence of the modern novel, prose was considered a non-literary form reserved for practical writing or translations of religious texts.<sup>60</sup> There are several verse patterns, each with different requirements for rhyme and line length. Often, a particular meter is used depending on the purpose of the writing. The seven and eight syllable meters for example are frequently used with writing meant primarily for entertainment, while a four syllable verse pattern called “kakagati” or “Crow’s Gait” meter, is commonly used for didactic writing.

Another distinctive feature of traditional texts is the themes of magic and the supernatural. The heroes of these stories, typically princes or reincarnations of gods, are usually equipped with supernatural weapons, such as magic arrows in the *Reamker*, or supernatural powers, such as magic spells learned from an ascetic that enable them to defeat their enemies.

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<sup>60</sup> Klairung Amratisha, 1998:14.

In contrast to traditional texts, modern Cambodian literature is written in prose, and the novel is the predominant form. The reason for the shift from verse to prose has much to do with western, particularly French, influence. The development of French-style high schools and universities in Cambodia and the growing nationalist movement of the 1930s and 1940s made the development of the novel an important feature of Cambodian cultural and national identity. For Cambodian writers and intellectuals seeking a place for Cambodian literature in the modern world, the development of the novel was a necessary condition.

Despite these two broad categories of Cambodian literature, it is still difficult to classify *Tum Teav* unequivocally. While it is written in verse, the form of traditional writing, its characters and plot are not at all typical of traditional Cambodian texts. The main characters and setting of the story are taken from everyday village life. They are not princes or reincarnations of deities, and they do not possess supernatural powers. To the contrary, they are ordinary people with human faults and failings. While there is no mistaking the Buddhist influence in the story, that alone is not enough to make the text traditional. Buddhist themes are a common feature of both traditional and modern literature. In addition to the setting and characters, other major themes of the story, particularly the tradition of

arranged marriage, closely resemble those in the early modern prose novels of the late 1930s and 1940s.<sup>61</sup>

*Tum Teav*'s content, particularly its treatment of the marriage custom, resembles early examples of the Khmer modern novel such as *Sopha* and *Kolap Pailin*. Reading the influential novel of Nou Hach, *Phka Srapoan*, first published in 1947, whose heroine dies after her mother arranges her marriage to the son of a rich Chinese merchant instead of her true love, one wonders to what extent Nou Hach's text is modeled after *Tum Teav*. For this reason, *Tum Teav* is placed more specifically in the transitional period between classical and modern Cambodian literature.

Clearly, *Tum Teav* shares features of both traditional and modern writing. Consequently, Khing Hoc Dy states that it is a transitional work and places it at the very beginning of his second volume on the literature of the 20th century.<sup>62</sup>

### ***Literary Versions***

In 1958, four years after Cambodian independence from the French, the Cambodian government stipulated that *Tum Teav* be taught in the third and first forms of secondary school. At that time, two versions of the story had

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<sup>61</sup> The first modern Cambodian novel, *The Waters of the Tonle Sap* by Kim Hak, was published in the periodical *Kambujasuriya* in 1938

<sup>62</sup> Khing Hoc Dy. *Contribution à l'histoire de la littérature khmère*. 2 vols. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993:7-8.

already been published. The first, entitled *Teav-Tum*, had been published in the periodical *Kampuja Bartaman* in 1932. The second was the version by Nu Kan entitled *Dav- Ek* that had been published in 1949 and 1953.<sup>63</sup> At that time, older palm leaf versions of the story were known to exist as well. The commission responsible for selecting the text to be taught in the schools considered these palm leaf manuscripts of the story to be more authentic and for that reason preferable to these newer printed versions.<sup>64</sup>

In order to locate and identify the original palm leaf manuscripts of the story, the commission undertook a search of the pagodas around the country and identified four manuscripts with different titles and in varying states of decay. Lacking a complete original, it was necessary to construct one. The four manuscripts were compiled and missing episodes completed with transcriptions of oral versions of the story. The text was entitled *Tum Teav* and published in 1960, with the well-known 19th century poet Sandhor Mok identified as the author. The writing was uneven, however, and the text was not well received by other literary scholars.<sup>65</sup>

Another palm leaf manuscript by Venerable Botumthera Som existed as well. Unlike the other palm leaf manuscripts of the story, this manuscript was complete and the author and date of composition were known. The

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<sup>63</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:435 & 447.

<sup>64</sup> The commission was made up of Hang-Thun Hak, Eng-Soth, Sam-Thang and Neang-Ho (Thong Phan, 1976:447)

<sup>65</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:447.)

Buddhist Institute published the manuscript in 1962, and it was used as the text for instruction in the schools. However, it remained a question whether Venerable Som's text was an original composition or an adaptation of the older manuscript presumably written by Sandhor Mok. In the years ahead, the question of the text's rightful authorship became a source of debate among Cambodian literary scholars.

### **Sandhor Mok**

The literary version of *Tum Teav* by Sandhor Mok was published in 1960 by Kim-Ki publishing house in Phnom Penh. As stated above, four professors at Lycée Sisowath, HangThun Hak, Eng Soth, Neang No and Sam Thang, compiled the text from four, incomplete palm leaf manuscripts, presumably written during the reign of King Norodom (1860-1903), to which they added passages from the oral versions of the story, as well as the final episode of the king's punishment from the version by Venerable Botumthera Som.<sup>66</sup>

Although the original manuscripts were missing the pages that would have identified the author, the poet Sandhar Mok was credited with authorship of the publication.<sup>67</sup> However, Thong Phan tells us that the original palm leaf manuscripts appear not to have been written by the same writer. For example, some had the title *Tum Teav*, while others had the title *Teav Ek*.

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<sup>66</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:118-9. The passages from Botumthera Som's version cover the end of the story, namely the king's punishment and Tum's death.

<sup>67</sup> The original manuscripts have been lost.



While Sandhar Mok was indeed the preeminent writer during the reign of King Norodom, the variation between the palm leaf manuscripts indicate that more than one writer had contributed to the literary version of *Tum Teav* published under the name Sandhar Mok.

Sandhar Mok was born in 1846 in Oudong. His father was a Palace mandarin during the reign of King Ang Duong (1841-1860). When he was eleven years old, an invading Vietnamese army took his parents prisoner, and Sandhar Mok was subsequently raised and educated by the Abbot of a pagoda near Oudong. He lived a very austere life and later suffered from an attack of smallpox that deformed and scarred his body. When Sandhar Mok disrobed, the Abbot presented him to King Norodom, who recognized his extraordinary intelligence and made him the royal secretary.

While a member of King Norodom's Royal Court, Sandhor Mok eventually married and had five children, four boys and one girl. His daughter married King Norodom's son, Prince Duong Chakr. Two of the boys studied in France and probably sent their father the stories of La Fontaine that Sandhor Mok translated into Khmer. Sandhor Mok was a prolific and gifted writer. In addition to his version of *Tum Teav*, he wrote

many poems and songs, some of which were translated into French by P. Collard. Sandhor Mok died in Phnom Penh in 1908.<sup>68</sup>

The plot of Sandhor Mok's version of *Tum Teav* follows the events described in the summary of the story presented above. A distinctive feature of this version is the story's Buddhist interpretation of the events. The tragic deaths of Tum and Teav are attributed to the Law of Karma, the Buddhist belief that one's present circumstances are a result of past actions. Accordingly, Tum's disrobing against the Abbot's instructions and betrayal of the Buddhist precepts produced the bad Karma that resulted in his violent death. Even the letter from the King was not able to stop consequences of Tum's bad actions. That is, Tum's Karma was more powerful than any temporal forces, even the power of the King. Similarly, Teav's refusal to accept Murn Guon to be her husband was not in compliance with the traditional marriage custom. According to this version, Teav's bad action produced the bad Karma that led to her tragic death.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Thong Phan, 1976: 123. Sandhor Mok was also the writer of the Royal Chronicle that A. Leclère translated and published in 1914 (Thong Phan, 1976: 126).

<sup>69</sup> Thong Phan, 1976: 127-130.



## Venerable Botumthera Som



ព្រះបណ្ឌិត សោម

កវីប្រជាជ្រៀយ

១៨៥២ - ១៩៣២

Venerable Botumthera Som was born in 1852 in the farming village of Kambrau in Prey Veng province. He was the sixth of seven children, all boys. In 1867, Venerable Botumthera Som became a novice monk at Wat Kamprau, where he learned to read and write.<sup>70</sup> After two years as a novice, he disrobed in order to help at the family farm. In 1873, when he was twenty-one years old, Venerable Som returned to Wat Kamprau and continued his studies.<sup>71</sup> He learned to compose poetry on his own and was

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<sup>70</sup> 1867 was at the beginning of the French protectorate (1863-1953) and the reign of King Norodom (1860-1904).

<sup>71</sup> Kambrau is on the border of the former province of Tbong Kmom where *Tum Teav* takes place.

the Abbot of the temple when he completed his palm leaf manuscript of *Tum Teav* in September of 1915 at the age of sixty-three during the reign of King Sisowath. He died in 1932 at the age of eighty.

In 1935, three year's after his death, another monk named Venerable Oum copied Venerable Botumthera Som's manuscript on a new set of palm leaf sheets. The copy comprises two fascicules and has 187 pages.<sup>72</sup> This version of *Tum Teav* has a total of 1050 stanzas, including the thirty-stanza preface in which Venerable Botumthera Som gives the manuscript's date of composition and identifies himself as the author.

The story is written entirely in seven-syllable meter. The seven-syllable meter uses four lines of seven syllables each. The last syllable of the second line must rhyme with the last syllable of the third line, and the last syllable of the fourth line must rhyme with the last syllable of the second

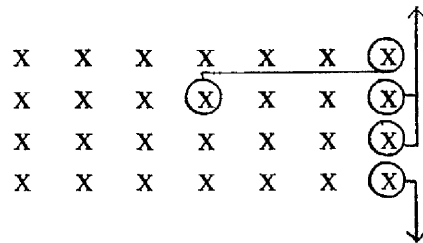
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<sup>72</sup> The copy was located at the Buddhist Institute library in Phnom Penh under code L.P. 664 (Thong, Phan. *Etude Sur Dum-Dav: Roman Populaire Khmer*. Paris: Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris III, 1976:135).

This type of manuscript, which had been used for writing since Angkorian times, was incised with a metal-tipped stylus and treated with a kind of black ink. Typically, the leaves measured 35 cm X 5 cm or 60 cm X 6 cm and averaged five lines of text on each side. The manuscripts were kept in monasteries where they were vulnerable to the dangers of weather and fire which explains why many palm leaf manuscripts are in poor condition or have been lost. Modern printing did not come to Cambodia until the late nineteenth century and was not generally used until the 1920s. In 1890, the first Khmer publication was printed in Cambodia. The first Khmer literary text was printed in Cambodia in 1908 by Adhémar Leclère (Khing Hok Dy and Mak Phoeun, "Cambodia" in *Southeast Asia, Languages and Literatures: a select guide*. The Southeast Asia Library Group, 1989:52-3).

line of the subsequent stanza. There is also an internal rhyme between the last syllable of the first stanza and the fourth syllable of the second stanza.

The rhyme scheme is represented thus:



In 1962, the Buddhist Institute published the first edition of *Tum Teav* by Venerable Botumthera Som using Venerable Oum's copy of the original manuscript. This text offered some important advantages over the other palm leaf manuscripts and was therefore used for instruction in the Cambodian schools. First of all, Venerable Botumthera Som's manuscript was complete. In addition, it was written on palm leaf, and the author and date of composition are definitely known.

However, these advantages did not satisfy those literary scholars who believed that Sandhor Mok was the legitimate author of the story and considered Venerable Botumthera Som's manuscript to be an imitation of Sandhor Mok's original. For them, using what they believed to be a plagiarized text was an injustice to Sandhor Mok and furthermore compromised the value of Cambodian cultural identity. On the other side, scholars such as Kong Somphea argued that Venerable Som's text was based on an oral version of the story performed by a woman from the

region named Sai Pour, who recited the story to the accompaniment of a *chapi*, a long-necked two-string lute.<sup>73</sup>

Indeed, the style of Venerable Botumthera Som's version has many features of oral discourse. At different times during the course of the story, the narrator speaks directly to the reader to say for example that the setting will shift from one time and place to another. Other times, the narrator comments on the conduct of one of the characters to advise the reader not to take that behavior as a model to follow. Like a good storyteller, the narrator keeps the action of the story moving to keep the reader's interest. When long descriptive passages do appear, it is usually Tum speaking in his poetic voice, using his talent with language to list the trees and fish with clever rhymes and word plays. Finally, as with many Cambodian folk stories, the use of humor in the story provides comic relief from the tragic circumstances of the characters.

### **Nou Kan**

The most recent literary version of *Tum Teav* is the version entitled *Teav Ek* by the well-known writer Nou Kan (1874-1947).<sup>74</sup> Nou Kan completed *Teav Ek* in 1942 and received first prize in a literary competition organized

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<sup>73</sup> Kong Somphea, *Botumthera Som: Writer of the 19th century*. Phnom Penh, 1971:12-19.

<sup>74</sup> Soth Polin, the grandson of Nou Kan, gives 1950 as the date of his grandfather's death (Khing Hok Dy, 1993:213.)

by the French Protectorate. The text, written in eight-syllable meter, was later published in 1949 by Kim-Seng publishers in Phnom Penh.<sup>75</sup>

In the introduction to his text, Nou Kan states that he based his written version of the story on oral versions he had heard and remembered during the reign of King Norodom (1860-1904). Nou Kan worked as a secretary in the royal Palace between 1891 and 1895, and probably heard the story performed during that time.<sup>76</sup>



Nou Kan was born in Takeo province. His father was a farmer, and he received a traditional temple education as a novice monk. When he was fifteen years old, Nou Kan left the monastic order. He worked as the secretary of the Governor of Traeng province in South Vietnam before

<sup>75</sup> Khing Hok Dy, 1993:17.

<sup>76</sup> Thong Phan suggests that it is possible that Nou Kan heard the story performed by Sandhor Mok (Thong Phan, 1976:147).

being appointed as the Palace secretary in 1891. In 1902, he won the first prize in a literary contest and was sent by the French Protectorate to study law in Paris. He subsequently held a number of administrative posts in Cambodia, including the president of the tribunal of the court of appeals and secretary of state for the minister of agriculture.

Nou Kan was also a prolific writer. In addition to *Teav Ek*, he wrote four published novels in verse and prose, adaptations of a Malaysian novel and a Chinese novel, two unpublished verse novels, and a book of proverbs.<sup>77</sup>

In his preface, Nou Kan states that *Teav Ek* is a true story. The events described in Nou Kan's version of the story correspond with those in Venerable Botumthera Som's version. Another similarity with the other literary versions is the importance of Buddhist themes. Like Venerable Botumthera Som, Nou Kan underscores the importance of the Buddhist law of Karma in determining the fate of the characters in the story. Nou Kan presents his interpretation somewhat differently however by emphasizing the deleterious effects of desire. Accordingly, desire is identified as the cause of the characters wrongdoing and negative Karma that leads to their destruction.

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<sup>77</sup> Khing Hok Dy tells us that Nou Kan did not read either Malay or Chinese and that these adaptations were based on Thai versions (Khing Hok Dy, 1993:17).

Along with Buddhist interpretations of the events in the story, there was also a political dimension to Nou Kan's version of the story. Nou Kan was opposed to the traditional form of punishment of hereditary slavery imposed on the people of Tbong Kmom in the story. He argued that imposing the punishment of slavery on successive generations was destructive and only served to perpetuate violence. In 1884, when Nou Kan was employed at the royal Palace, King Norodom abolished slavery throughout the Kingdom.<sup>78</sup>

### **Kong Huot and Chau Seng (French Adaptation)**

In 1970, a French adaptation of *Tum Teav* by Kong Huot and Chau Seng appeared in *Culture et Civilisation Khmères No. 7* published by the Université Bouddhique Preah Sihanouk Raj. The authors based their adaptation of the story on the version by Sandhor Mok and in no uncertain terms indicate their position on the controversy over the story's authorship in their introduction:

"Better known under the name *Teav-Ek*, this poem would have been written by the poet Sandhor Mok at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; but no manuscript officially carries his name. The majority of Cambodians nevertheless consider Sandhor Mok as the author of this tragic love story that took place in the 16<sup>th</sup> century."

The second part of the introduction voices their disapproval of the Buddhist Institute for giving Venerable Botumthera Som instead of Sandhor Mok credit for the story's in its 1962 publication of the story:

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<sup>78</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:157.

"On the other hand, our Buddhist Institute edited the same poem in 1962. The author this time was a monk by the name Som.

"In its preface, the Buddhist Institute explained that it found itself with two manuscripts: the one by Som, the Abbot of the pagoda in Kamprau, located in the village of Sithor Kandal in the province of Prey Veng, and the one by Oknha Vilboreach Sena Nou Kan, written in Phnom Penh in 1942 and entitled "Teav-Ek."

"Since no authentic manuscript carried the name of the author, the Buddhist Institute, despite popular opinion, did not attribute the poem to Sandhor Mok."<sup>79</sup>

Kong Huot and Chau Seng end their brief introduction by asking the reader to forgive them for any discrepancies between their French adaptation and Sandhor Mok's version. Specifically, they explain that the capital referred to in their adaptation of the story is Srey Santhor and not Lovek, as in the version by the Sandhor Mok. They explain that Sandhor Mok's version takes place during the reign of King Rama Cheungprey. The authors revised the royal capital to Srey Santhor because "all the history texts" state that King Rama Cheungprey reigned between 1594 and 1596 in Srey Santhor, before being assassinated by the Portuguese Diégo Bellaso and the Spaniard Blais Ruiz, partisans of Prince Pontha Ton, the son of King Satha.

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<sup>79</sup> Kong Huot & Chau Seng, 1970:Introduction.



### ***Modern Adaptations***

In the 1980s, Cambodian society began to rebuild itself after the devastation it had suffered for almost four years under the Khmer Rouge regime. However, the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh was under an international embargo led by the United States and had few resources at its disposal.<sup>80</sup> Despite this lack of resources, the few Cambodian writers, dancers, singers and actors who had survived the Cambodian killing fields returned to Phnom Penh and began the painstaking process of reconstructing Cambodian arts from what little remained.<sup>81</sup>

During this time, *Tum Teav* was adapted for theatrical productions, illustrated cartoon format books, film and musical compositions. These modern adaptations attest to the story's on-going importance and

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<sup>80</sup> Following its traumatic defeat to the Vietnamese, the United States maintained an anti-Vietnamese foreign policy until the early 1990s when the embargo was finally lifted and the process of normalizing relations between the two countries began. Since Cambodia was seen by the U.S. as a proxy of Vietnam, it was subject to the same policy of international isolation.

<sup>81</sup> The process of reconstruction was also going on in the border camps along the Thai-Cambodian border. In 1988, my wife and I visited Khao I Dang and Site 2, the two largest refugee camps along the border, and were kindly given tours of the camps. In both cases, we had the privilege of being invited to dance and drama performances. In the early 1990s, for example, my wife and I had the pleasure to see a theater group from the Site 2 refugee camp perform *Tum Teav* while on tour in the United States. (See Dr. Toni Samantha Phim's *Dance and the Spirit of Cambodia* (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1994).

popularity in contemporary Cambodian society, as well as its continued use as a vehicle for social criticism and political propaganda.

### **Theatrical**

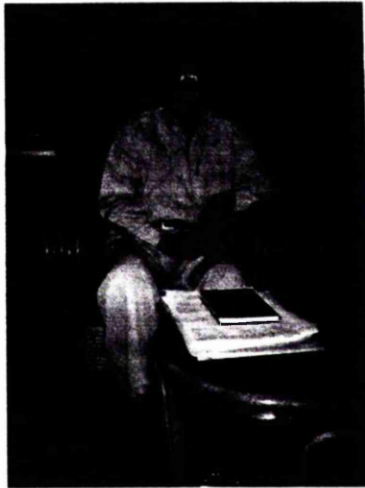
In the early 1980s, Mr Pech Tum Kravel and Mr Chen Phong, two of Cambodia's pre-eminent artists, adapted *Tum Teav* for a *Yike* performance of the story performed by the National Department of Arts under the Ministry of Culture.<sup>82</sup> *Yike* is a form of Cambodian operatic theater in which the characters perform their parts to the accompaniment of a traditional orchestra. In their adaptation of *Tum Teav*, two narrators describe the scene and introduce the characters and events with comical conversations between themselves and asides directed to the audience. Resembling the comical team of Laurel and Hardy, the two narrators bring comical relief to the otherwise tragic events of the story. Eschewing political commentary, Mr Pech Tum Kravel and Mr Chen Phong's interpretation of the story is primarily concerned with the ill-fated love between Tum and Teav.

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<sup>82</sup> My thanks to Professor Tomoko Okada who sent me a video taped recording of the performance.

In 1964, an earlier adaptation of *Tum Teav* for theater was made by a group of artists at the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh (Thong Phan, 1976:454).

**Figure 1: Mr Pech Tum Kravel**



Mr Pech Tum Kravel has been a vital force in Cambodian theater since the 1960s. From 1960 until 1967, he attended the School of Pedagogy, the National School of Theater and the School of Choreographic Arts at the University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh. From 1969 until 1975, Mr Pech Tum Kravel was a teacher and actor at the National Conservatory of Performing Arts.

Born in 1943 in Kandal province, Mr Pech Tum Kravel's original name was Chaom Thot. After surviving the Khmer Rouge regime, he changed his name to Pech Tum Kravel in honor of the characters in *Tum Teav*, whose example of steadfast devotion helped him find the strength to endure the years of suffering under the Pol Pot regime.<sup>83</sup> From 1979 until 1981, Mr Pech Tum Kravel was vice-director of the National Department of Arts under the Ministry of Propaganda, Culture and Information and

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<sup>83</sup> From my personal interview with Mr Pech Tum Kravel (August 1999).

was director there until 1993. He has written and adapted many works for Cambodian theater, the best known of which is his adaptation of *Tum Teav*.<sup>84</sup>

### Comic Strip Format

In 1988, the state-sanctioned publisher Yuviway printed a version of *Tum Teav* in cartoon strip format.<sup>85</sup> The illustrations and text were done by Mr Ut Roeun and based on the version of the story by Venerable Botumthera Som.<sup>86</sup>

**Figure 2: Cover of the 1988 illustrated version of *Tum Teav***



In the forward to the text, the publisher states that the book was produced in order to instruct Cambodian youth about the morality of the youth of

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<sup>84</sup> In addition, Mr Pech Tum Kravel has written texts on Cambodian poetics, shadow puppetry, as well as the many forms of Cambodian theater.

<sup>85</sup> After the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, the Vietnamese-installed government led by Heng Samrin and Hun Sen took power in Phnom Penh.

<sup>86</sup> In 1961 and 1963, two texts of *Tum Teav* in comic strip format appeared. However, the authors of these texts are not known. Although texts deal with the theme of abuse of power, the king is depicted uncritically (Thong Phan, 1976:452).

previous generations who opposed the abuse of power of the feudal system in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The publisher also states that the comic strip format was chosen in order to make it easier for the intended audience of young people to read and remember.<sup>87</sup>

As with all publications by the authoritarian government in Phnom Penh, this version of *Tum Teav* conveys the government's socialist propaganda of "class struggle" and opposition to abuse of power. The book's introduction states that Tum and Teav provide heroic examples of the spirit of the struggle. It continues by pointing out that unlike the modern revolution, Tum and Teav were not part of an organized movement guided by a government ideology, and this was the reason for their failure to achieve victory over the ruling class. In his preface, the writer states:

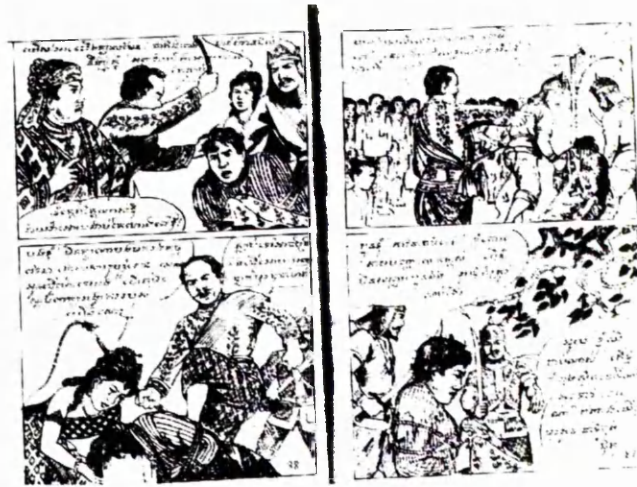
"The story of Tum Teav took place during actual feudal times. But the meaning and style of this story clearly shows the terrible face of the Khmer feudalists of the 16<sup>th</sup> century that abused their power and trampled over the people.

"This story also shows the spirit of struggle for freedom of the youth and people who opposed the abuse of power by the ruling class. But the struggle for freedom during that time was based only on individual aspirations and didn't have system of government to guide them correctly. ... Consequently, their efforts to seek freedom were squelched by the vicious ruling class."

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<sup>87</sup> There was virtually no education under the Khmer Rouge. Until the 1990s, Cambodia was subject to an embargo that severely limited the reconstruction of the country, including the educational system.

**Figure 3: Tum's Execution by Ah Chun**



### Film

In 1966, the Association of Khmer Filmmakers in Phnom Penh produced a film version of *Tum Teav*. This version was centered primarily around the conflict between Tum and Teav on one side and Teav's mother and Ah Chun on the other.<sup>88</sup>

In 1972, Indra Devi Film, under the direction of Biv Chhay Leang, produced a loose adaptation of *Tum Teav*. Mr Thong Phan informs us that for commercial reasons the film includes scenes that are not found in any of the literary versions. Nor does it address the central theme of true love between Tum and Teav.<sup>89</sup> It is interesting to note that Biv Chhay Lieng (1930) is also a prolific writer of historical fiction. Between 1951 and

<sup>88</sup> The treatment of the Buddhist themes in this film adaptation of *Tum Teav* was the cause of strong protest by some Cambodian Buddhists (Thong Phan, 1976:453).

<sup>89</sup> Thong Phan, 1976:454.

1967, he produced twenty-eight novels and works for theater. Since 1976, Mr Biv Chhay Lieng has lived in France where he has created the Indra Devi cultural association and established Cambodian folk and classical dance troupes that have toured widely around Europe.<sup>90</sup>

## Song

In the year 2000, the popular musical recording company Rasmey Hang Meas based in Phnom Penh issued a Compact Disk entitled *The Love of Tum Teav*. The CD consists of fourteen songs based on the lyrics written by Mr Pech Tum Kravel for the Yike stage performance of *Tum Teav* discussed above.

As the title of the CD suggest, the true love between Tum and Teav is the primary theme of the songs. However, the songs do follow the general plot of the story as well. The first song is entitled “My Child Teav Enters the Shade” and is sung in the voice of Teav’s mother who advises her daughter on the proper conduct for a girl who “enters the shade.”

**Figure 4: CD cover of *The Love of Tum Teav***




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<sup>90</sup> Khing Hok Dy, 1993:85.

The following songs alternate between the voice of Teav and the voice of Tum as the events of their tragic love unfold. The lyrics of these songs often closely resemble excerpts from the literary version by Venerable Botumthera Som. For example, the fourth song entitled, "What Are You So Afraid Of" is an exchange between Tum and Teav where they flirt before making love. The lyrics in two verses of the song are almost identical to stanzas 414 and 415 in which Teav and Tum trade playful metaphors:

414.

- a. I am like a flower,
- b. While you are like a bumble bee
- c. That flies around and spotting the flower enters straight away.
- d. Afterwards, it doesn't delay and is soon on its way again.

415.

- a. Tum said, "I am like the lion king,
- b. While Miss Teav is like a large cave.
- c. If the lion king has a place to live,
- d. He will never allow himself to leave.

The songs do not deal with the king's punishment or the abuse of power by Ah Chun. However, in the twelfth song entitled "The Cake is Bigger Than The Mold" Teav's mother angrily reprimands her daughter for challenging her authority and refusing to give up her feelings for Tum. True to the theme of true love, Teav holds her ground and affirms her love for Tum.

In conclusion, the different versions of *Tum Teav* in various genres as discussed in this chapter attest to the enduring importance of the text and



the story in Cambodian culture and society. The setting and characters reflect daily life like no previous literary work. Furthermore, the popular belief that it is based on actual events in Cambodian history adds to the story's importance. Indeed, like other well-known examples of Cambodian culture, such as the Angkor Wat or the Apsara Dance, *Tum Teav* is a major feature of modern Cambodian society. Let us now continue to the next chapter in which my translation for the story is presented.

## Chapter 2: The Story of Tum Teav<sup>91</sup>

### *Introduction (stanzas 1-29)*

1.
  - a. This will be the telling of a story composed
  - b. In an entertaining verse-form.
  - c. Ever since former times, the story has been
  - d. Told, and over the years parts have been lost.
  
2.
  - a. It is inexact, uneven, and unclear, and sentences are missing.
  - b. Striving to check and double-check the meter of the discourse,
  - c. We corrected it to be new, so that the world
  - d. Could preserve it and continue to pass it on.
  
3.
  - a. We tried hard to keep it intact and correct it to be better.
  - b. Afraid of going too far, we committed ourselves to the task.
  - c. So not to have anyone say that we threw away what was important,
  - d. We only adjusted it to conform to the times in which the story takes place.

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<sup>91</sup> This translation is based on the 1962 edition of *Tum Teav* by Botumthera Som published by the Buddhist Institute.

4.

- a. My name will be presented anew
- b. To the world. I have devised a plan.
- c. I am determined and well prepared.
- d. I have decided to deliver my name exactly,

5.

- a. And let all the great people, men and women,
- b. In the world know in advance who composed this text.
- c. This is meant just to be a break from boredom,
- d. So that whenever they reflect on it, they will feel amused.

6.

- a. I will declare myself according to a riddle.
- b. It begins by saying, 'As a name, it is regarded as simple.
- c. 'The letter "S" is given just as it is spoken.
- d. 'The name is then anticipated by adding on'

7.

- a. 'The vowel "A". The "S" is then followed by an "M."
- b. 'The vowel "E" before the "S" is needed before making correct
- c. 'The original name as it was from our mother and father.'
- d. Now the name has transmigrated by its merits

8.

- a. And come to be embodied, and having good fortune,
- b. The Buddha bestowed upon it existence.
- c. Having a place, its body lived as a person
- d. By means of the virtue of the Triple Gems upon which each day it depended.

9.

- a. It came to dwell as a monk at
- b. Watt Kambrau where it resolved unequivocally
- c. To release itself from the Wheel of Life. It was able to evade
- d. Fatigue and fear because of its determination to succeed.

10.

- a. That name followed its master
- b. And like a fragrant flower smelled even against the wind.
- c. The title of Preah Padumatther was the achievement
- d. Of the level of merit it earned through its moral conduct and offerings.

11.

- a. The master had total compassion,
- b. The likes of which there is not on earth.
- c. There were head monks in the city of Kamprou
- d. And other monks who thirsted and hungered to have knowledge like his.

12.

- a. I went to the city devoutly,
- b. Intending to commit myself to my objective.
- c. I studied the Pali chants and dissertations,
- d. Wanting to attain virtue and perfection.

13.

- a. The Abbot selected me
- b. To study under his direction just as I
- c. Hoped. Whatever the assignment or instruction,
- d. The compassion of the Abbot came with it.

14.

- a. Organized by the Abbot, the work of the monks
- b. Residing at the temple brightened
- c. The light of the world. Whenever skills
- d. Were attained, the Abbot gave his approval.

15.

- a. On our rounds to beg for alms, we went far and near.
- b. We didn't have fear of there not being women to ladle rice for us,
- c. Or that someone would take offense because we traveled
- d. Without having permission cards and because of our negligence have us  
haul earth.

16.

- a. We finished composing these verses in the Buddhist era,
- b. Year two thousand
- c. Four hundred and fifty-eight,
- d. On Monday, the fourteenth of the month

17.

- a. Which had passed four days in September
- b. Plus one at the beginning of the rainy season,
- c. In the year of the Rabbit,
- d. The seventh year of the ten-year cycle.

18.

- a. I left the poem so future generations, whomever they may be,
- b. Would truly have knowledge of composition.
- c. My intention was to leave something for future generations, not to show off
- d. What I know. Yet, I fear people will say that was my reason.

19.

- a. I declare my intention to narrate this poem
- b. So that it may be placed in the religious tradition.
- c. I raise my hands carefully to chant
- d. To the noble Buddha

20.

- a. About the merits of the Dhamma, great and extensive,
- b. Around eighty-four thousand high
- c. And many deep, in an effort to help
- d. Living beings attain the path of Nirvana.

21.

- a. And about the merits of the monks, the Buddha's disciples,
- b. Whose dreadful fear of wrongdoing alerts them so they do not hunger  
for things,
- c. And are able to renounce the wheel of life. They truly
- d. Make offerings to the Buddha. There are monks

22.

- a. Who are dedicated completely to cultivating a religious life.
- b. Comparable to a vessel meticulously prepared,
- c. They pursue the study of texts taking great pains
- d. And effort in fear of misunderstanding their meaning.

23.

- a. I give thanks to the Great Teacher,
- b. The mother and father of the Noble Forest
- c. Spirits, who rescued my life.
- d. There is nothing that can adequately compare

24.

- a. To the virtue of the Noble Teachings
- b. Whose proclamation gave rise to my life.
- c. I give thanks to the Noble Truths and Noble Path
- d. Which push aside and extinguish misery and joy so we may achieve Enlightenment.

25.

- a. I give thanks to the powers of Noble Fire and Water,
- b. To the Noble Sun, Earth and Moon,
- c. To the Noble Wind, Stars and Divinities,
- d. Who reside in the prisons of the sixteen spheres,

26.

- a. To Noble Time and the Noble King of Hell,
- b. And the four-armed guardian securely placed
- c. At the Kingdom of the Enlightened,
- d. Who rest in the Paradise of the Thirty-three Divinities,

27.

- a. To Noble Indra presiding over his Kingdom,
- b. Whose power has authority
- c. Over the sixteen Heavens and their Divinities
- d. That Noble Vissakamma had built,



28.

- a. I ask that your power that rules all worlds
- b. And is the shade and refuge
- c. In order to evade the vicissitudes of the body
- d. Protect me as I wish it would.

29.

- a. Despite whatever sickness may try to afflict me,
- b. Do not allow it into my body.
- c. Please cleanse me
- d. With a clear light shining like a full moon.

***Part 1 (30-138): Tum's and Teav's First Love and Separation***

(Tum and Pech's friendship at the temple; their trip to Tbong Kmom to sell *taok* tables; the meeting of Tum and Teav)

30.

- a. This telling begins with the name Tum.
- b. In the rice farming province of Ba Phnom,
- c. He was born naturally of parents
- d. About whom however nothing is known.

31.

- a. When he was big enough,
- b. And many years had passed, his mother dressed him up
- c. And brought him to study and threw away his toys.
- d. She sought out a well-known temple

32.

- a. Where the Abbot received Tum gladly,
- b. And taught him to be skillful in the fields of magic and prayer.
- c. Tum was able to please the Abbot because of his intelligence and diligence
- d. And resolved to be a novice monk.

33.

- a. Living at the temple under the Abbot for a long time
- b. Was another monk who was also skilled
- c. And well liked, by the name of Pech.
- d. The two monks made *taok* tables to sell.

34.

- a. Tum was eloquent and had other talents as well.
- b. He had a beautiful voice and handsome body.
- c. His good nature radiated through his disposition,
- d. And eventually he considered Pech as his younger brother.

35.

- a. Pech knew how to play the flute.
- b. He was intelligent and his musical skills were well developed.
- c. The two novice monks thought similarly,
- d. And the knowledge they each possessed was about equal.

36.

- a. They made the *taok* tables and brought some to sell
- b. At the houses of relatives near the temple.
- c. But when the cold season arrived,
- d. They became worried.

37.

- a. Evil thoughts tormented Tum's mind and body.
- b. He met with Pech, and they talked together like one person.
- c. Tum said, "Oh, Pech! You must help!
- d. "We've sold only a few *taok* and it's been a long time already."

38.

- a. "It hasn't been profitable, and business is slow.
- b. "But don't give up. Like the ancient saying tells us,
- c. "“Everywhere close by
- d. "“Young men are courting young girls.””

39.

- a. "What the ancestors say is not wrong at all.
- b. "We are young men in the world,
- c. "Yet we beg for rice and don't know anything!
- d. "Why do we fritter away our lives? We should take advantage of our youth and travel."

40.

- a. After thinking it over, they came to an agreement. Looking askance,
- b. They couldn't contain themselves. They diligently prepared
- c. Candles and incense and hurried to the Abbot's residence,
- d. And knelt before him to offer salutations.

41.

- a. Before long, the Abbot spoke.
- b. "That you should want to go somewhere seems suspicious."
- c. The novice monks responded, "Not at all.
- d. "We beg you not to doubt us. Please have mercy."

42.

- a. "As both of us wish respectfully
- b. "To leave you, sir... I,
- c. "The two of us, would depart
- d. "To help someone who has a problem in a distant town."

43.

- a. "If we stay at the temple, it is sure that the boredom
- b. "Would cause us relentless sorrow.
- c. "I'm so unmotivated, sir,... not happy...
- d. "Frustrated and confused. I want to travel"

44.

- a. "And follow my feelings carried by the wind of the season.
- b. "If we leave you, sir, we would be careful to act becomingly.
- c. "If we bring the *taok*, we would take along
- d. "Plenty to sell. Over there, we wouldn't have to negotiate the price."

45.

- a. The Abbot soon spoke
- b. Saying, "Ah, as you wish, go.
- c. "You have said goodbye to me and have decided to go sell the *taok* already.
- d. "Why is it necessary to tell me?

46.

- a. "Go ahead! But be careful about getting into trouble!
- b. "Don't, boys, when you see girls,
- c. "Revert to clowning around or impropriety,
- d. "So that unkind criticism reaches me.

47.

- a. "A shameful reputation in the world
- b. "Is contrary to Buddhist law.
- c. "Once you have sold all of the *taok*, don't hang around
- d. "Figuring out your income. Come back immediately!"

48.

- a. The two monks saluted
- b. Goodbye to the Abbot. Departing in a hurry,
- c. They quickly went
- d. To get the *taok* and arrange them upside down in preparation for

49.

- a. Loading them into the ox cart. They thought to take cooked rice,
- b. And, having wrapped it, tried to find a sack
- c. In which to pack it carefully with rice paddy in case the road was rough,
- d. Since during that season there was bound to be rain and thunder.

50.

- a. After the monks prepared the sacks of rice
- b. In preparation for their journey,
- c. They hauled the cart and set it upright,
- d. And led the ox to be yoked then drove away.

51.

- a. That day at around eight o'clock,
- b. The sun's sparkling light
- c. From the East, bright red,
- d. Illuminated the rice fields around them.

52.

- a. Seeing that there was water and grass along the road, they quickly
- b. Released the ox and tied him. The monks ate rice,
- c. While the ox ate grass. Afterwards, they quickly led the ox
- d. To fit him into the yoke. With the ox harnessed, they continued on.

53.

- a. They arrived at a village and the place where they could sell the *taok*.
- b. The lay people bought them, and there were only a few left over.
- c. The remaining few they sold along the road
- d. As they forged ahead toward Tbong Kmom province.

54.

- a. At the border of Thothung
- b. Tgei province, monks usually stop because people gather
- c. Who want to buy *taok* from them. Some monks watched jealously
- d. Seeing that Tum had such a handsome appearance.

55.

- a. Some of the women said, "Oh! If
- b. "He were mine, I would grab him and convince him
- c. "To let me have my way with him!" They edged closer to Tum,
- d. And stole furtive glances until they were face to face.

56.

- a. They weaved through the crowd toward their love near the well,
- b. And jostled and stretched excitedly to see him from a knoll in the shade
- c. Of a banyan tree in the unusual Year of the Tiger
- d. That makes men and women so easily excited.

57.

- a. Tum and Pech stayed close to the village
- b. As a number of lay people helped them
- c. Sell off the remaining *taok*, taking advantage of the rare
- d. Opportunity of having the monks there a long time.

58.

- a. The lay people delayed them for many days.
- b. They housed them and wouldn't let them leave
- c. Their village, because they knew
- d. That the rainy season had arrived when,



59.

- a. According to their understanding,
- b. The monks could stay as long as they wished,
- c. And give them the benefit of reciting the scriptures.
- d. Tum had great skill and could mesmerize them

60.

- a. With his sweet voice so pleasing
- b. To hear. Both young and old, the widows
- c. And young women of Tbong Kmom, rushed
- d. To hear the sound of Tum's words.

61.

- a. At that time, Miss Noe, who was the servant
- b. Of Miss Teav, was making her way to the well.
- c. Holding a clay water pot carefully, she tried
- d. To enter the crowd to find out what was happening.

62.

- a. Straining her body to see, she furtively listened to
- b. The beautiful sound like someone bowled over.
- c. Swooning,
- d. Noe was enraptured and speechless.

63.

- a. Noe couldn't wait to get back home to tell Teav everything.
- b. Teav, who was in the shade, was bored.
- c. The woman who was Teav's mother had for possessions
- d. Only her child who was more beautiful than any other woman.

64.

- a. Noe thought to herself and quickly decided what to do.
- b. She filled the jar & carrying it on her head quickly walked away swaying side to side.
- c. Reaching the house, Noe went up to Teav's room at once.
- d. Reporting in detail, she spoke to Teav saying,

65.

- a. "Oh, Teav! Miss Teav!... Goodness!...
- b. "That monk knows how to chant!
- c. "His voice... it's so soothing to hear him speak...
- d. "Like the sarika bird eating a banana!"

66.

- a. Teav was perplexed. She didn't understand what Noe was talking about.
- b. But when Noe told her clearly, she became excited.
- c. At that point Teav was not confused. Understanding the situation, she became overly
- d. Excited and wanted to meet Tum and even dared to tell her mother.

67.

- a. She left her room and bowed low before her mother.
- b. Teav said, "Oh, Mother! Mother,
- c. "Indulge me a moment as I report some news.
- d. "Our people are far from any temple.

68.

- a. "We have never met any young monks,
- b. "Or even known of one coming this way.
- c. "I heard Noe say that two monks
- d. "Are staying in the village who have brought *taok* to sell.

69.

- a. "She said they have come from far away and have decided to stay
- b. "At someone's house. They are young monks
- c. "With truly beautiful voices. They know different things and can do them well.
- d. "Noe says their voices are worth hearing!"

70.

- a. The woman who was Teav's mother carefully listened.
- b. After hearing Teav, her child, she answered saying, "Ah...
- c. "Reach and get my scarf." And she walked away
- d. Gracefully eyes askance and well proportioned in the way of an older woman.

71.

- a. Reaching the village, she heard the din of the crowd.
- b. Teav's mother said, "Oh, it's really true!"
- c. She moved up to see the young monks who were indeed very talented
- d. And joined her hands and bowed to salute them.

72.

- a. Then she addressed them saying, "Venerable Sirs,
- b. "Would you go to my house
- c. "To eat soup? We would be so pleased
- d. To have you. Please do not refuse us."

73.

- a. As Tum listened to the laywoman's invitation,
- b. His eyes inspected her closely.
- c. He answered saying, "If I am to accept your invitation, you must hurry
- d. And go home to finish preparing to make it permissible."

74.

- a. Teav's mother returned home in a rush.
- b. She unrolled mats and spread them out in place,
- c. Then took various kinds of pillows,
- d. White and black, and stacked them up and put them in a row.

75.

- a. Pech and Tum met and agreed to accept the invitation.
- b. Pech said, "It's time to eat anyways."
- c. Tum said, "Hold on, the cow is in the grass.
- d. "If he breaks the rope and eats the seedlings, we'll have to repay the owner."

76.

- a. Pech said evasively, "Let's get going!
- b. "If we miss meal time, we'll be in trouble.
- c. "I'm afraid when we return to the temple, Teacher will scold us
- d. "Saying we're sneaking around after girls.

77.

- a. "We've traveled all this way for what?
- b. "We should use good judgment.
- c. "When called to eat, we should follow the rules and not behave improperly.
- d. "What the old custom says cannot be wrong.

78.

- a. "It says there once were four monks
- b. "Who had achieved good conduct and didn't have any faults.
- c. "If they had an affair with the laity at all,
- d. "Their reputations would be ruined making them five."

79.

- a. "For that reason, you should go alone. I'm afraid people will say something about
- b. "The laywoman who came and invited you
- c. "To eat and have tobacco at her house.
- d. "Go ahead and eat. I'll tend to the cow myself."

80.

- a. Tum, anxious to leave, fretted
- b. That Pech would bring up
- c. And explain every custom to elucidate his point.
- d. Finally, Tum was able to dress up in his monk's robes.

81.

- a. Made of pure silk, the texture of Tum's robes was fine and good-looking.
- b. The crisp fabric had a mustard-yellow
- c. Sheen that shined brightly
- d. And was accentuated by his white scarf.

82.

- a. He applied a fragrant root scent
- b. And took a fan and stuck it in his belt. He looked quite handsome
- c. With his charming shoulder bag lifted around his neck.
- d. When he finished dressing, he left.

83.

- a. When he arrived at the house, Teav's mother came down quickly.
- b. She knelt on the ground and bowed with raised hands together
- c. Saying, "Thank goodness you've come!"
- d. "Now wait here while we fetch water from the tank for your to wash."

84.

- a. The perfumed water gave off a fragrant smell.
- b. Using the soap they offered, Tum scrubbed himself clean and fresh.
- c. The fragrant soap with its distinctive smell
- d. Make him think he was lucky to be a monk.

85.

- a. After washing, he changed his robes
- b. And climbed the stairs to the house. His stomach was in knots.
- c. Teav's mother brought a kind of folded cushion and presented it to him.
- d. Then she offered the monk some tobacco.

86.

- a. "Surely you know chants of some kind.
- b. "Don't be modest. Please sir,
- c. "Come recite a poem or read a *sastra*.
- d. "We would like to listen a while.

87.

- a. "Give of all your knowledge, whatever it is.
- b. "As you will, impart
- c. "Your recollections in some way. We would enjoy that.
- d. "My family have come also so we may listen all together.

88.

- a. As Tum listened to Teav's mother, he was suddenly startled.
- b. His eyes glanced towards the doorway.
- c. He noticed Teav standing outside pacing back and forth,
- d. Flitting in and out of her room,

89.

- a. Glancing around fitfully. She poked her head into the guest room mouth agape.
- b. She wanted to leave her room badly but no one had called her.
- c. She could only look on anxiously by herself for she was young and single.
- d. Then she darted into her room to get a scarf and draped it across her chest.

90.

- a. When Tum saw that, his stomach fluttered.
- b. He fell in love and anguish arose tightening his chest.
- c. "Oh! Is that Teav, my dear?"
- d. Instead of turning away, Tum tried to capture Teav's heart by singing the Dhamma.



91.

- a. Tum chanted *no moe tas sa* three times
- b. Truly beautifully, while some of those present bowed in awe.
- c. Tum chanted the story of Motrei when, under the direction of her husband, Siddhartha:
- d. "She bid farewell to him and disappeared into the forest

92.

- a. "To traverse the mountain regions
- b. "Looking to pick the fruit growing in the jungle.
- c. "There were forest spirits everywhere
- d. "That frightened Montrei terribly.

93.

- a. "She eventually fell to the ground completely lost.
- b. "She sobbed, curled on her side pitifully.
- c. "'It's already cold and growing dark,' she said. There's no
- d. "'Person anywhere to help save my life.

94.

- a. "'I'm separated from my husband because I left and went afar.
- b. "'Oh, dear god! I'm completely undone!
- c. "'I'm worried the children will miss meditating with their father.
- d. "'The children must be crying. My children, what can I bring to give you?

95.

- a. "They must be thirsty and hungry, and there isn't any fruit left.
- b. "It's too much! My husband must have been searching
- c. "And calling for me since morning. I'm worried he wasn't able to eat.
- d. "The same for the children. They must all be famished..."

96.

- a. Tum summarized and condensed the plot of the story
- b. Then skipped to the story of Baramata.
- c. He stopped to chew tobacco very briefly
- d. As the family paid respect to the souls of their ancestors.

97.

- a. The family were mesmerized by Tum.
- b. Some listened so intently they forgot even to relieve themselves.
- c. The beauty of the chanting attracted the interest of passersby. They gathered around
- d. And squeezed together in the shade in front of the house.

98.

- a. Then they said, "Venerable, please cast your words for us to hear as well."
- b. Some moved in close to the house wanting to be the first to hear.
- c. They raised both hands in salute saying,
- d. "Please, tell us sir, what story are you chanting?"

99.

- a. "Venerable, don't keep it from us. Speak clearly so we may know the story."
- b. Tum tried to figure out what to do. He saw Miss
- c. Teav take a velour scarf,
- d. A newly bought vial, cigarettes and areca seeds.

100.

- a. When she finished folding the scarf, she raised it
- b. Over her head three times and prayed
- c. Saying, "Please, Venerable Buddha,
- d. "Please, let my heart have its wish.

101.

- a. "Please help make it so he and I meet and are joined as one.
- b. "Don't let us be separated.
- c. "In this life or any future life, I truly desire
- d. "To attain the wish to which I dedicate myself."

102.

- a. Teav finished preparing her offering and quickly went
- b. To Miss Noe
- c. Saying, "Noe! Sister, have mercy!
- d. "Offer the tobacco leaves wrapped in this *pahom* to him.

103.

- a. "Let me gain some merit.
- b. "Don't let me lack wealth. In
- c. "This life and the next life, let me have high rank.
- d. "Don't make it so I continue to be poor."

104.

- a. Tum received the offering
- b. Then unwrapped it and took out the areca. When he had finished chewing it,
- c. He stopped to rest a little then sprinkled water mixed with oil and flour on the laity.
- d. He recited magical love chants:

105.

- a. "Oh karavika bird! Recall how
- b. "King Sampaly beckoned Queen Monychenda."
- c. Then he took out some proteal and ate it with the areca
- d. And continued to chant, revealing his feelings to Teav completely.

106.

- a. He chanted quickly to conclude,
- b. Then tried to think of a story about a family.
- c. He recalled the story of Prameno, the thief,
- d. Who led away the children of Vessantra tied with a vine:

107.

- a. "As Prameno led the way, it makes you feel sorry for the children.
- b. "They are crying, thinking, 'Oh! Today
- c. "Prameno, the evil thief,
- d. "Will beat us to death. And where is our mother?"

108.

- a. "The children had left the house a long time.
- b. "Their mother wanted to gather
- c. "Fruit for them. She was worried
- d. "And worked harder because her children return hungry."

109.

- a. Like a small boy Tum
- b. Chanted keeping the *pahom* wrapped not opened.
- c. He took it as evidence that Teav loved him.
- d. He finished telling the story and said thank you to Teav's family.

110.

- a. The laity saluted Tum, and some of them tried to persuade him
- b. To stay in Tbong Kmom. "I will take care of you.
- c. "Please be my god-son, Venerable.
- d. "Have mercy and accept my offer."

111.

- a. Before leaving, Tum said,
- b. "Dear people, I'm sorry if where I should have been correct I erred in my talk.
- c. "Goodbye everyone,
- d. "For the sun is setting and night approaches.

112.

- a. "Also, I left the monk Pech alone.
- b. "I am very distressed and upset
- c. "And afraid of hurting his feelings too. He takes care of me always,
- d. "And I always think of him. Furthermore, we are both monks."

113.

- a. As Tum explained why he had to leave,
- b. The lay people listened. Then he left the house
- c. And set off. Reaching Pech, who was
- d. Like a brother, Tum said, "Hurry up, come here!"

114.

- a. "Come here!" Tum thought to joke with Pech
- b. And let him know what had happened and especially to boast about Teav's beauty.
- c. He said, "Pech! my dear brother,
- d. "I have begun my courtship of Teav."

115.

- a. "She is so good, my beloved brother!
- b. "Now, I am seriously thinking that I want a go-between
- c. "To make inquiries. She should initially
- d. "Find out what they want me to pay in order to claim

116.

- a. "Teav's love and have her await my return.
- b. "We will go back to the temple but stay only until the end of the year,
- c. "Then say goodbye to the Abbot and disrobe because we will promise
- d. "Teav that we will come back as soon as possible."

117.

- a. The two monks decided
- b. Not to delay at all. Tum
- c. Spoke saying, "Brother Pech, it's time we
- d. "Gather our rice and put it into a sack

118.

- a. "Then load it in the cart. Don't delay.
- b. "It's time to get going.
- c. "And Sok Srok Ey is a far away.
- d. "We must not delay. We can't wait any longer."

119.

- a. The two monks decided to return.
- b. At the break of day they left promptly.
- c. After saying goodbye to all the people of the village,
- d. They proceeded to the main road.

120.

- a. After driving through some back roads, they had to stop and take a break.
- b. Tum, overcome, head bent down, wallowed in grief.
- c. Depressed, he tried to hide his long face and look normal.
- d. "What pain!" he said to himself. Suddenly awake, he thought to open

121.

- a. The wrapped-up package that smelled of flowers.
- b. He pulled it out and brought it close to his body.
- c. Then he noticed all the trees around him
- d. That he described in rhyme.

122.

- a. "Oh, *tonlap tonla* trees, come!
- b. "Ripe *tlok* tree! *Saok* tree lining the road!"
- c. "*Tlan* tree! I feel better for the moment!
- d. "How could I abandon Teav and leave her all alone?



123.

- a. "Oh, what flower's scent could be so fragrant?
- b. "Is it the fragrant jasmine flower or the strychnine flower?
- c. "The scents from the *pahom* which Teav arranged
- d. "And applied to the scarf disorient me.

124.

- a. "Abandoning Teav puts her in a predicament.
- b. "She never considered me to be a monk.
- c. "That's why she dared to go ahead
- d. "And make the offering so carefully to satisfy her desire.

125.

- a. "The wax containers of the *pahom* are over-filled with Teav's offerings.
- b. "Teav, my dear, my constant worry is dreadful!
- c. "I feel grief again anew... the tobacco leaves
- d. "That Teav, my love, offered to me...

126.

- a. "Now I notice the birds frantically nesting.
- b. "The mother and father call to each other then fly off to find
- c. "Fruit to carry in their beaks. They want to bring it
- d. "To their children protected inside the hollow of a tree

127.

- a. "And feed them until they are satisfied. My misfortune
- b. "Is so great! Teav's pain is great.
- c. "Her sadness doesn't abate or relent.
- d. "I pray to the gods to watch over her.

128.

- a. "Please grant me my wish and that you will have me
- b. "Return because Teav truly loves me.
- c. "Now, I have come to stop and rest.
- d. "This burden inside my body makes me numb and weep."

129.

- a. After stopping, Pech called Tum saying,
- b. "Tum, don't worry and depress yourself.
- c. "What's to worry? Miss Teav has made up her mind.
- d. "Who would dare take Teav away?"

130.

- a. Afterwards they retrieved the ox and brought them to be yoked to the cart.
- b. They drove away turning this way and that looking for a shortcut
- c. Or footpath that led to the main road.
- d. They drove straight for the city of Phnom Chrom Sralau.

131.

- a. Tum was stupefied as he thought about Teav again.
- b. His chest became tight, and he was morose.
- c. He had a worried and distressed look on his face.
- d. "Your husband sees the grass, the *smach* and *trach* trees and *tras* plant.

132.

- a. "Oh, *Teal* tree! My body is broken.
- b. "Teav depends on me. Thinking of her I feel such regret.
- c. "*P'diek* tree, I was wrong to leave her at all.
- d. "*Kau kauh* tree, I can't think. There is no relief!

133.

- a. "The *kokei* trees, so abundant, are like my sickness."
- b. Anger, overflowing, numbed him
- c. As he called out saying, "Pech, dear friend!"
- d. Pech didn't answer. His apparent indifference helped Pech to keep from

134.

- a. Being sad. Then putting himself in Tum's place, they both cried
- b. As Pech struggled to reply, "Dear Tum, stop this.
- c. "Wait until we reach the temple later tonight.
- d. "We must think about bidding goodbye,

135.

- a. "And informing our teacher of our wish
- b. "To leave the monkhood because we have an urgent matter to attend to.
- c. "We will lie to him saying a relative is not well
- d. "And has contracted a deadly disease that is most serious."

136.

- a. The two monks talked together.
- b. They drove frantically as the sun
- c. Sank low. Cold, Tum and Pech watched
- d. The sun gently sink

137.

- a. Until it had finally disappeared, and the people went into their homes.
- b. Nearing the summit of the mountains in
- c. The west, they turned toward
- d. The mountain called by the name *somaroreach*.

**Part 2 (138-298): Tum's Sin**

(Tum's and Pech's return to the temple; the Abbot's refusal to allow Tum to disrobe; Pech's proper disrobing; Teav's longing for Tum's return; Tum's mother's failed attempt to help Tum obtain the Abbot's permission to disrobe; Tum's disrobing without permission; Tum's request for the Abbot's forgiveness; the Abbot's blessing and warnings.)

138.

- a. Tum and Pech drove until reaching the Wat and stopped for good.
- b. Right at dusk, they entered the temple grounds
- c. And stopped to release the ox
- d. And let him eat the fresh grass growing inside the temple compound.

139.

- a. Then Pech and Tum met
- b. All the other monks who came
- c. To greet them and say hello.
- d. "Did you trade the *taok* for rice or silver?" they asked.

140.

- a. "Or did you take *kak* coins? Whatever else,
- b. "Tell us, too!" Tum and Pech let them know clearly
- c. To satisfy their curiosity, and since the two monks were eager to please,
- d. They said, "We mixed with

141.

- a. "Rice and girls and baskets,
- b. "With resin, with horns, with clay jugs,
- c. "With *pahom* turbans and sweet honey,
- d. "And scarves too that were equal in value to the *taok*."

142.

- a. Then Tum and Pech decided not to delay too long.
- b. Together they went straight to find the Abbot
- c. And greet their teacher. At that time, the Abbot was rousing from a nap.
- d. Waking up, he cupped water in his hands to wash his face.

143.

- a. The two monks bowed down low,
- b. Cautious and afraid of their teacher who had just awakened.
- c. They were worried that he would be angry and that he would kick them.
- d. After washing, the Abbot turned his face, and looking at them asked,

144.

- a. "Pech and Tum, did you go
- b. "To trade the *taok* all right?
- c. "Were the laity over there arrogant and rude,
- d. "Or did they all offer trades?"

145.

- a. The monks answered respectfully
- b. And told the Abbot they had received as much rice as they expected.
- c. Their profit was, they guessed, equivalent to three or four *taok*.
- d. This would be just sufficient to cover their spending for the coming year.

146.

- a. The monks told their teacher all the appropriate information,
- b. Then said goodbye and quickly turned back
- c. To their quarters to rest.
- d. Tum threw himself down in bed exhausted and started to think about Teav again,

147.

- a. Saying to himself, "What horrible things have I done
- b. "That grief should arise anew to make my heart heavy?"
- c. He reached for the *pahom* that he had wrapped and tucked into his robe,
- d. And kissed it and held it against his body.

148.

- a. Perfumed scents wafted from the flowers.
- b. Tum took the *pahom* in his hand
- c. And brought it to cover his head, believing
- d. That by doing that he could at least lessen his grief.

149.

- a. Tum said, "Oh, flowers! flowers!
- b. "You are fragrant and have pollen, while I am without peace.
- c. "The scent of the *romchek* flower keeps me from falling asleep.
- d. "The myriad perfumes of the flowers numb my breast!

150.

- a. "Oh, I so often imagine
- b. "Meeting my sweetheart to calm my heart.
- c. "Her mother invited me to chant the story of *Montrei Peap*,
- d. "And my love offered me flowers and fruit.

151.

- a. "Paying homage to the great Buddhist doctrine,
- b. "She perfumed the *pahom* and presented me
- c. "The offering. Humbly, Miss Teav wished
- d. "That she would meet me just as I wished to meet her.

152.

- a. "Now there is a problem, and I am separated from Teav.
- b. "Oh, Teav! This stifling grief torments me.
- c. "Teav! Suppressing them cannot defeat these convulsions of sorrow.
- d. "I don't know what to say.



153.

- a. "I am the one who imagines Teav here.
- b. "The one who helps her relax,
- c. "And thinks not to let her touch the ground
- d. "Afraid that a tiger or an elephant or some animal might attack her.

154.

- a. "I imagine stealing Teav away to come
- b. "With me to stay forever. Teav! You could not relay your feelings for me directly.
- c. "You could only give me a sign as evidence that you would wait
- d. "By way of the tobacco, the areca, the flowers and fruit,

155.

- a. "By offering the *pahom* to me.
- b. "Now I think of you every place I go.
- c. "As I wonder about you all alone, I am barely
- d. "Alive. Will my grief

156.

- a. "Drag on until the end of the year?"
- b. As the days passed Tum became despondent as his love for Teav kept increasing.
- c. He watched all the other young people come in droves
- d. Overfilling the temple during scheduled ceremonies.

157.

- a. They came to ceremonies. They came to ordinations. They came to *Pchhum Ben*.
- b. They arrived for the gatherings from many directions.
- c. They came to feed the monks and make offerings as is customary
- d. At the end of the rainy season retreat.

158.

- a. Tum's burning grief didn't abate.
- b. Miserable, Tum called Pech to come and spoke saying,
- c. "Pech, dear brother, I'm hurting!
- d. "To continue like this is unbearable!"

159.

- a. Pech listened calmly to what Tum said then replied,
- b. "Oh, Tum! We must relieve your pain so you can relax.
- c. "Instead of awaiting the time we planned to disrobe,
- d. "Let's go ask leave from the Abbot."

160.

- a. The two monks agreed on this
- b. And quickly gathered candles and incense.
- c. They walked over to the quarters of the Abbot,
- d. And kneeling, they quickly bowed three times

161.

- a. Then lit the candles and incense and bowed to pray.
- b. When their chanting ended, they entered the Abbot's room to ask leave.
- c. Nervously they said, "Please, sir,... do not blame us...."
- d. "Our reason for coming... to leave His Holiness..."

162.

- a. "To disrobe..."
- b. "Agree, Your Holiness, to help us..."
- c. Both of them then saluted the Abbot saying,
- d. "Please give us, Sir... a sign of your pity..."

163.

- a. "Because we are worried... We are under obligation to..."
- b. "My relative... He contracted something..."
- c. "A serious and debilitating disease... She's not right..."
- d. "When my mother reached the rice field, she turned to pray..."

164.

- a. "Entreating the family spirits..."
- b. "In great fear... then she promised..."
- c. "To honor all the spirits for helping her..."
- d. "And remember her ancestors with a complete offering..."

165.

- a. "Danger engulfs her... my mother prays...
- b. "Saying she would be relieved by having me return home...
- c. "My disrobing would give her relief from the pain...
- d. "I will stay with her until she is old and help her defeat any other difficulties."

166.

- a. Their teacher listened closely then grabbed
- b. A writing tablet to make some calculations saying, "You scoundrels
- c. "Are lying to me! You are cowering to
- d. "A woman's cajoling! Now you rush to abandon the temple and hurry to disrobe!

167.

- a. "I've calculated the numbers and recalculated every factor.
- b. "The numbers indicate that Tum
- c. "Must not act impetuously for fear of suffering.
- d. "I see that Pech however can avert this adequately."

168.

- a. "Pech can disrobe at the end of the Second Month of the lunar calendar.
- b. "Tum, you must wait until it is propitious.
- c. "You must wait until the Sixth Month before disrobing.
- d. "After disrobing you will surely advance to become important."

169.

- a. Upon reaching the First Month
- b. The wind gusted continuously.
- c. Anxiousness assailed Tum,
- d. As he huddled in his room crying and worried about many things.

170.

- a. On the one hand, he was distressed at not being able to disrobe.
- b. On the other, he pined for Teav who was
- c. Beyond reach in Tbong Kmom and whom perhaps
- d. Someone had taken away.

171.

- a. Tum and Pech looked for a way to end the torment.
- b. Tum said, "Let's wait for the next holy day,
- c. "Then we will leave no matter what!"
- d. Pech answered, "Don't be too anxious, or it won't work!"

172.

- a. Tum's depression revived once again.
- b. He missed Teav. He missed her beauty. He had no rest.
- c. He wouldn't take rice. He couldn't eat,
- d. Or only very little. From one bowl he had three mouthfuls.

173.

- a. The time to stop counting the days had arrived.
- b. During the Second Month, strong winds swept in.
- c. The refreshing, cool air made one alert and one's skin goose-bumped.
- d. It scattered the clouds that came sewn together en masse.

174.

- a. They poured in bunched together in close groups.
- b. Darkness filled the places where the clouds patched over the sky.
- c. The two brothers decided to stumble on,
- d. Blindly unashamed of being as careless as anyone could be.

175.

- a. Pech entered the temple to bid goodbye to the Abbot
- b. Thinking, "What if something goes wrong... the Abbot will curse me."
- c. He went up to him and prostrated himself,
- d. Lifting both hands together in supplication.

176.

- a. The teacher responded to Pech saying,
- b. "Pech, whatever day you want to disrobe, go ahead and do it.
- c. "Anytime during the Second Month appears correct.
- d. "Disrobe and farm rice. The weather is comfortable."

177.

- a. Tum, hiding quietly, secretly listened to what they said.
- b. "Pech, for you to disrobe right away makes sense."
- c. Hearing this, Tum held back his sobs.
- d. His insides became twisted more and more as he fretted and waited.

178.

- a. Finally, Tum said to himself, "I can no longer stay here.
- b. "Dear God, why must I suffer so?
- c. "How much longer do have to endure this torment?
- d. "I might as well be dead.

179.

- a. "I don't regret becoming a monk or having shaven my head like this.
- b. "Fate has brought me to be plunged into darkness.
- c. "I'm lost as if my head were covered with a pot or someone had grabbed me tightly.
- d. "I don't care anymore if the Abbot is angry at me."

180.

- a. Pech went ahead and disrobed that morning.
- b. Tum, devastated, got up and went to await an audience with the Abbot.
- c. But Pech tried to stop him saying, "Not yet.
- d. "Wait until you have settled down and are not so upset."

181.

- a. We digress from our discussion of Tum and Pech to discuss
- b. Miss Teav, worried, always in seclusion.
- c. She had become very miserable and introverted.
- d. Increasingly uncertain, she awaited Tum's return.

182.

- a. She said to herself, "My regret pains me.
- b. "I can't relax. The weight on my body is like a mountain
- c. "That was uprooted and fell pinning me down.
- d. "It crushes and bleeds me dry with its constant, hard pounding.

183.

- a. "Pain and anger twist inside my liver.
- b. "My breath is intermittent. I'm scared to death.
- c. "Enough! Oh Tum, I'm dying!
- d. "My body is pale and emaciated from this misery.

184.

- a. "From a great distance, Tum has abandoned me.
- b. "He has left me all alone."
- c. Defeated and dejected, unable to revive herself,
- d. Teav turned away to see beguiling hallucinations.



185.

- a. She imagined hearing Tum's voice.
- b. He was chanting for a group of people. "Where are you?" Teav asked.
- c. The sound of his voice made Teav yearn for
- d. His charming and beautiful form.

186.

- a. Kind Teav recognized him immediately by his monk's robes
- b. And glow like a full moon.
- c. His bright face was round like the moon,
- d. As though polished clean. Then he turned away and disappeared.

187.

- a. "Will he come back in body?
- b. "Or has he taken a bad turn and fallen ill?
- c. "What can I do to find out what's happening quietly?
- d. "Perhaps I can hire someone to search high and low and investigate.

188.

- a. "I don't know which is the right way to go.
- b. "Oh! The pain is so horrible!
- c. "I buckle beneath the weight like a boat taking on water.
- d. "Because I am frail, I am heading for a quick death."

189.

- a. Then Teav called for Miss Noe,
- b. "Noe! Dear friend, help me. Help me figure this out.
- c. "Do my hallucinations mean it will it be a long or short before Tum returns?
- d. "Noe, estimate how many months and days before he comes."

190.

- a. Miss Noe, the governess, dodged the question
- b. And said, "Wait until next month to watch the clouds
- c. "Drift from the northeast to take shelter
- d. "And gather together. At such time thoughts will come to you, Miss Teav.

191.

- a. "The wind will sweep in the cold air and the dew will fall.
- b. "A turmoil in Tum's heart will make him feel sympathy for you.
- c. "He will try to think about his Teav and want her love,
- d. "And ask himself, 'Why persist in being a monk ?'

192.

- a. "Everyday Tum worries, too. He has no peace.
- b. "He can't sleep at all because he has abandoned you.
- c. "He broke away from you because he had resolved
- d. "To build up merit and be true to the Doctrine

193.

- a. "Tum's desire is to have you as his beloved.
- b. "The reason that took him far away
- c. "Will not last very long, dear Teav.
- d. "He will leave the monkhood and your wish will be realized.

194.

- a. "Don't grieve and fret. Please control yourself.
- b. "Most likely he is not sneaky, so don't panic.
- c. "I fear that if you are not well, hardships will arise.
- d. "If your mother finds out about this, she will surely curse you."

195.

- a. "She will say you are not pure and that you behave like a cow.
- b. "The family will snicker and laugh saying,
- c. "'The child has family. She has ancestors.
- d. "'Therefore she should not behave like a bad girl.'

196.

- a. "You called me to consider the future. Don't be angry.
- b. "I wouldn't refuse you anything, dear.
- c. "I've tried to understand you always.
- d. "The limit of your ability to control the situation is like the saying:

197.

- a. "One's nature is a cake that they have premixed.
- b. "It has been measured out according to the cook's wish.
- c. "Never is the cake any bigger than the mold.'
- d. "Oh, Teav! I am so worried about being able to take care of you adequately.

198.

- a. "I'm afraid Tum may not come to look for you.
- b. "Teav, my sister, don't scorn me. I'm afraid when
- c. "I think about it. I am afraid misfortune will beset you.
- d. "Because of what? I have heard that Guon plans to revenge Tum.

199.

- a. "Because he is the son of the Governor of the province,
- b. "His rank is high, and he is wealthy. The Governor and his people
- c. "Rule over Tbong Kmom province,
- d. "While Tum is an ordinary person and must answer to them like everyone else.

200.

- a. "I went ahead and told you this. Dear, don't be hurt.
- b. "Don't be offended or upset.
- c. "Although we can't calculate just when Tum, looking for you,
- d. "Will arrive, he would not abandon a good thing.

201.

- a. Teav answered, "True, it's just as you say, Noe.
- b. "You have knowledge and insight
- c. "And speak rightly. Most likely Tum will arrive soon.
- d. "Your telling this makes me excited more than ever."

202.

- a. Believing this, Teav relaxed somewhat .
- b. She laid herself down and slept a while.
- c. Later, she awoke startled, and meditating on Tum,
- d. She lit a candle and incense and prayed to him.

203.

- a. Let's leave the story of Teav again in order to show
- b. The way Tum always takes the *pahom*
- c. To cover his robes and body. Its perfume smelled
- d. Truly fragrant without ever lessening.

204.

- a. In the dead of the night,
- b. He was afraid, body and soul.
- c. He was depressed and worried.
- d. He didn't regret wanting to disrobe, for he missed Miss Teav terribly.

205.

- a. Early morning arose clearly, and sunlight
- b. Shined from the east brightly.
- c. The heat reached Tum's body not long afterwards. Quickly
- d. Tum got on his feet and walked away.

206.

- a. When he reached the haven
- b. Of his mother's house, Tum met her.
- c. Indeed, when his mother saw that her child had arrived,
- d. Joyfully, she descended from the house in a hurry.

207.

- a. Reaching him she asked, "My son,
- b. "When did you leave your monk's quarters?
- c. "My darling child, did you come here for being
- d. "Miserable or content?"

208.

- a. Tum cried copiously. Tears ran down his face.
- b. He intended to lie because he was not happy.
- c. "Oh, mother! I cannot eat...
- d. "I'm not well at all."

209.

- a. "There is a throbbing pain in my stomach that hardly ever stops.
- b. "It's as though someone is scratching and pinching me. It seems like dysentery
- c. "Or like a hot mucus churning inside me.
- d. "It agitates and scares me, and I can't sleep.

210.

- a. "And I'm unable to close my eyes. Oh mother!
- b. "Upon my mattress and pillows I lay rigid and motionless.
- c. "When I lay down to sleep, everything is stiff.
- d. "I'm kind of angry. I try to be patient and suppress the discomfort.

211.

- a. "I told this story previously
- b. "When I went to bid goodbye to the Abbot, but he didn't even look at me.
- c. "I said I was not well and that dysentery pained my insides.
- d. "I said my body was uncomfortable, not so well.

212.

- a. "The Abbot wouldn't give me an inch, while he released Pech from the monkhood.
- b. "I begged the Abbot in every way, but he blocked every argument.
- c. "What does keeping me here accomplish? It makes me miserable.
- d. "Mother, go persuade him to let me leave!"

213.

- a. Tum's widowed mother cried along with her child.
- b. She kneeled down then replied,
- c. "My dear child, in every case
- d. "You have never behaved improperly in any way.

214.

- a. "The Abbot likes you more than any other. He likes you so much!
- b. "He has entrusted you with all the temple's possessions, old or new.
- c. "He let you take care of his tobacco and areca nut.
- d. "Rice, water and food, you are allowed to eat as you like."

215.

- a. "What has happened this time?
- b. "I am always happy to give you my consideration. I feel sympathy
- c. "And pity you as though we had the same life.
- d. "Now you are miserable and no one knows.

216.

- a. "From the time you were small until you were grown up,
- b. "Dear child, I have heard only good news.
- c. "But after hearing what you've told me, I'm afraid of doing wrong.
- d. "But if that's how it is, you may ask me to go speak to the Abbot.



217.

- a. When Tum heard his mother, his sadness lessened.
- b. His body relaxed because of the comfort of being in her presence
- c. And because his mother said just what he wanted her to,
- d. According to his misleading information. Then Tum said goodbye,

218.

- a. "Mother, I am going to the temple.
- b. "Mother, what time can you go? Make haste.
- c. "Hurry. Don't delay.
- d. "Come before I am too weak.

219.

- a. "Another thing you can do concerns the ancestor's spirits.
- b. "They usually take care of us in every way.
- c. "Therefore, help me placate them. If you can do this,
- d. "When we go to ask leave from the Abbot, he will be put at ease."

220.

- a. Tum's mother reflected on the situation.
- b. She arrived at a plan of action quickly.
- c. She grabbed fresh betel nut and areca,
- d. Candles and incense, and took a lace scarf to cover herself and left.

221.

- a. Tum's mother moved gracefully and smoothly.
- b. Then she proceeded to enter the temple to seek an audience
- c. With a monk of moderate seniority
- d. Saying, "Oh, sir! I'm embarrassed.

222.

- a. "Everybody has always applauded Tum, both young and old.
- b. "They would praise him highly. Now everything has changed.
- c. "The Abbot is not patient with him either.
- d. "Tum says the Abbot has changed his mind and attitude about him.

223.

- a. "Tum is my son. What happened, sir?
- b. "Normally everyone is very pleased with him. Why did the Abbot change his mind?
- c. "My child came to tell me saying,
- d. "'I'm leaving the monkhood.'

224.

- a. "It's intolerable for me to keep this in.
- b. "I can't restrain myself and remain silent.
- c. "My son is only a novice, sir.
- d. "Because I'm a woman, there are limits to what I can do."

225.

- a. Then Tum's mother bowed goodbye.
- b. From there she went
- c. To the Abbot's quarters. She greeted him,
- d. Lifting her hands and raising them over her head.

226.

- a. Then she said, "I would like to say that
- b. "If I speak incorrectly, please sir
- c. "Have pity on me for I am only a lay woman.
- d. "What do I know to dare to speak in Tum's stead?

227.

- a. "Tum, who is my son, arrived
- b. "Home and leaving nothing out said he can no longer endure the monkhood
- c. "And wants to disrobe. If he remains a monk
- d. "For a long time, he's afraid he'll miss the point of the Dhamma

228.

- a. "And commit careless mistakes because he's naive
- b. "And fickle. He's too easily tempted by pleasure.
- c. "Sir, I'm so worried. On the one hand, I'm afraid for him to disrobe.
- d. "On the other I'm distressed about the dysentery that afflicts him.

229.

- a. "Is it true, sir, that it's very serious?"
- b. "I'm worried he was given Chinese or Vietnamese sweet cake."
- c. "Urinating at night, he says, is sometimes difficult sometimes easy."
- d. "Having to constantly defecate at night makes him unable to sleep at all."

230.

- a. The Abbot, not long afterwards, spoke,
- b. "No, the young novice Tum
- c. "Went away to sell *taok*. After selling all of them,
- d. "He returned love sick over a girl."

231.

- a. "In the province of Tbong Kmom, there are many young women
- b. "Who are charming, young and single."
- c. "Now they desperately desire husbands."
- d. "For that reason I am not pleased."

232.

- a. "We must not allow Tum to disrobe."
- b. "I've calculated the numbers and seen that he would be met by death."
- c. "Tum's fortune predicts bad luck."
- d. "He must be prevented from disrobing until the end of this year."

233.

- a. The woman who is the widowed mother of Tum
- b. Listened as the Abbot gazed
- c. Glaringly at her. He dissuaded her sternly
- d. With harsh language as though he were extremely angry.

234.

- a. Then she left and reached the road where Tum was waiting for her
- b. She said, "Dear child, don't argue.
- c. "How can you oppose the Abbot? It would be comparable to a war.
- d. "He is like the French when they show off their guns.

235.

- a. "Although the Abbot may shoot you dead, your reputation doesn't end.
- b. "Just as animals die, the same goes for ourselves.
- c. "If the Abbot predicts you will be uprooted, then you will be
- d. "Knocked down flat on your back dead.

236.

- a. "For this reason, are you going to stop trying to disrobe, my child?
- b. "If you continue to be frustrated, you will be hurt.
- c. "Now go find some water to drink and wash quickly.
- d. "When you finish cleaning up and eating, begin on your studies.

237.

- a. "Study the Buddhist scriptures and their meanings and do whatever
- b. "To move away from this problem once and for all.
- c. "It's like mending a torn dress
- d. "With fine needlework, or putting things right by sweeping dirt from the house."

238.

- a. Then Tum answered, "That's enough! Stop!
- b. "Mother, don't compare everything. I can't stand it.
- c. "If that's the way it is, go home and lay down to rest.
- d. "You've helped enough. Relax. Don't torment yourself."

239.

- a. Come the morning, we wonder why Tum
- b. Has taken only the *pahom* Teav gave him.
- c. He is walking into the forest to seek solace
- d. And quiet. Then Tum stands up to pray.

240.

- a. He salutes the Buddha and the Abbot
- b. And changes out of his monk's robes. Not long afterwards he leaves the forest.
- c. Then he goes to enter the temple
- d. To expiate his sins, sad that in the future his wrongdoing will yield bad results.

241.

- a. Tum addressed his mother.
- b. Physically upset as though gravely ill
- c. With that sickness that is heartache and stays without letting go,
- d. He bid goodbye to her.

242.

- a. "Venerable Sir, do not take offense at what I've done.
- b. "Do not use this sin against me, Sir.
- c. "Please, Your Grace, absolve me and allow me
- d. "To reach the shore where there is no more suffering."

243.

- a. Tum decided to get away from the temple straight away.
- b. Distraught from frustration, he ripped his kromar & pinned the end making a pocket.
- c. Then he grabbed his monk's clothes, folded them and inserted them into the pocket.
- d. He carried the bundle on his hip as he walked until reaching the big forest.

244.

- a. He asked the forests spirits to hide and shelter him. Then he took out all
- b. The braided flowers, votive candles, incense and food
- c. To offer the spirits. Then Tum
- d. Joined and lifted his hands to pray.

245.

- a. Tum chanted saying, "*Okasateh*
- b. "Kamom kamey now daen oeuy
- c. "Chrobay bomnong kay
- d. "Karasek sray min sdey soh."

246.

- a. Tum prayed to the spirits not to hinder him,
- b. As he changed out of the last of his monk's clothes without regret.
- c. Then he put on a fine, clean silk sarong
- d. And lifted all of his monk's garments and hung them from a branch.

247.

- a. The forked branch sagged close to the ground.
- b. The young monk Tum who had dared to perform
- c. His own disrobing then continued on his way.
- d. Yet, his conduct, sneaky and improper, was not finished with him.

248.

- a. He arrived at the temple grounds after a short time.
- b. Avoiding everyone, he looked for Pech. When he found
- c. Pech, he laughed and took him out of sight.
- d. Tum grabbed Pech by the shoulders and shook him playfully.



249.

- a. From that time, it was not long before
- b. Tum began to pine for Teav and realize what he had done.
- c. He hung his head in utter despair and confusion,
- d. Missing greatly the place where they had first met.

250.

- a. He imagined waking up and grabbing
- b. Hold of Teav's hand and saying, "Maybe
- c. "As you are a single, grown woman
- d. "You can run away from home with me."

251.

- a. He imagined his lovely sweetheart listening to him
- b. As he chanted to her and the lay people outside the house
- c. In the town of Tbong Kmom where they first met.
- d. He had not forgotten the power of their love.

252.

- a. Tum, who had just disrobed,
- b. Spoke to Pech saying, "Pech! I ask
- c. "For your pity, since my
- d. "Heart wants only to pine for

253.

- a. "And think of Miss Teav who
- b. "Has given me the wax container.
- c. "The cloth *pahom* gives off a fragrance that makes me delirious
- d. "Every night and day. I have just disrobed."

254.

- a. Pech readied himself as he waited and listened to Tum.
- b. He responded, "Oh, Tum!
- c. "If it is like that, you cannot go on in peace
- d. "Because you will never be happy."

255.

- a. "Your sin remains because you are culpable.
- b. "You are a monk who is clearly from a good family,
- c. "Yet doesn't believe in the Buddha. Most serious
- d. "Is that you dared to run away and disrobe without remorse!"

256.

- a. Tum said, "If that's so, Pech, let's go.
- b. "We must find the food and all the things we need
- c. "To offer the Abbot to absolve me of my sins.
- d. "Then will be gone the anger in his heart for what I've done."

257.

- a. The two students fully realized what they had to do.
- b. They proceeded to Pech's home as fast as they could
- c. To find all the food and fruit they needed for the offering.
- d. When they had finished, Tum told Pech to accompany him to the temple.

258.

- a. They entered into the temple grounds. When they climbed to the Abbot's quarters,
- b. The Abbot was seated, reclining on a cushion.
- c. Tum and Pech sat themselves down and raised their hands evenly
- d. Clasped together above their heads.

259.

- a. The Abbot looked directly at Tum and Pech
- b. Saying, "Tum, poor fellow, what business do you have coming here?"
- c. "Why do you want to meet me again, you rascal?"
- d. "Enough! I won't say anything against you."

260.

- a. "A teacher should never curse his student."
- b. "I don't have anger for you. I will be honest and forthright."
- c. "If a student slips and goes awry"
- d. "In his actions, I try to direct him"

261.

- a. "So he can rebuild a reputation that is high and far-reaching.
- b. "If a student is afraid and ignorant,
- c. "I try to teach him not let his studies be left undone.
- d. "I call on him to study the Doctrine until he knows it well."

262.

- a. Pech and Tum respectfully listened to their teacher.
- b. As he directed them about every path of action, they kept scratching themselves
- c. And lifting their heads bashfully and sheepishly.
- d. Afterwards they carefully responded to his words.

263.

- a. "Please grant us forgiveness for the suffering we have caused.
- b. "Save us so we may go forward in our lives, Sir.
- c. "Venerable, pardon all of our sins.
- d. "Mercifully protect our reputations from now on.

264.

- a. "I was wrong and improper in everything I did.
- b. "Please, I ask of you, Venerable, to save me.
- c. "Being just a student, Venerable, I was made ignorant
- d. "By mundane desires."

265.

- a. The Abbot responded,
- b. "Ah, true indeed. It's just as you've described.
- c. "Those words, in terms of accuracy, are well said.
- d. "But you must still beware of danger to yourself.

266.

- a. "I am not angry about any of your sins old or new.
- b. "But in the world do not let this happen again.
- c. "Sins from the past come to occupy you unseen.
- d. "You are never rid of them as the Laws of Karma tell us clearly.

267.

- a. "The Buddha showed us there is always sorrow.
- b. "Sometimes it changes to be happiness right up until you are old.
- c. "As for the state of death, it is unavoidable.
- d. "Such were the words the Buddha spoke in his teachings."

268.

- a. Tum and Pech bowed with hands clasped while
- b. Listening to the Buddha's teachings
- c. And as the Abbot, who pitied his students, chanted
- d. The Three Refuges of the Buddha.

269.

- a. "These prayers, the Lord Buddha bestowed His advise to
- b. "Anybody who thirsts and hungers for knowledge, both male and female
- c. "Born everyday into the world,
- d. "Wishing that happiness may be attained."

270.

- a. Pech and Tum listened to their teacher
- b. Chant to the end offering his blessing. They responded
- c. Saying, "Amen. May we have relief
- d. "And respite from sorrow as the blessing we happily receive."

271.

- a. They lifted their hands in obeisance.
- b. In their hearts there was a sense of satisfaction
- c. That spread through their bodies stirring happiness.
- d. They were so relieved and excited they seemed unable to contain themselves.

272.

- a. "Then Tum bid goodbye to the Abbot saying, "Please
- b. "Venerable, dismiss me because I have spoken
- c. "With all the laity in the outlying provinces.
- d. "They have already spread word amongst themselves that I will go there.

273.

- a. "Specific arrangements were made which I'm not allowed to miss.
- b. "Those families must act according to
- c. "Calculations to buy the *taok* on credit for rice.
- d. "If I delay too long, I'm afraid our agreement will be nullified."

274.

- a. "The good people of Tbong Kmom
- b. "Who reside in the thorny forest
- c. "Depend on my magic chants and knowledge of
- d. "Ghosts, village spirits and sorcerers.

275.

- a. "Then they had a happy idea.
- b. "To prevent my leaving they planned to arrange a marriage for me,
- c. "Then arranged things with Miss Teav who had just entered the shade.
- d. "Because Pech and I hated the idea, we snuck back to the temple."

276.

- a. The Abbot tried to listen to the words of Tum and Pech,
- b. Then responded abruptly, "You've made this up!
- c. "It's not true, you rascals!
- d. "As usual, misery which causes everything is behind this.

277.

- a. "The people in the world, both women and men,
- b. "Never really hate the opposite sex.
- c. "Don't lie to me! I know the situation.
- d. "But I will not talk like someone trying to catch you in a lie."

278.

- a. Then the Abbot gave
- b. Tum permission to act according to his wishes without restrictions.
- c. He said, "Go ahead and don't worry about having offended me.
- d. "It's up to you to behave well.

279.

- a. "Don't flaunt your knowledge or be arrogant.
- b. "Beware of others who can hurt you because you are too self-absorbed.
- c. "Don't speak without respect for others or their family
- d. "Relations. Always be on your best behavior.

280.

- a. "Don't be the type of soldier who overruns whatever is around him.
- b. "Don't tease children, or people will curse you.
- c. "As for the wives of powerful people, don't
- d. "Entertain the desire to snatch them away for yourself.



281.

- a. "Don't flirt with them.
- b. "Normally women are obstinate. They want you immediately.
- c. "They look for men and lead them astray.
- d. "They are quick to satisfy their desires without worrying about the consequences."

282.

- a. "Gossip of your misdeeds will reach me.
- b. "The Buddha's teachings show
- c. "That one's sins continue a long time,
- d. "Passing from one birth to the next."

283.

- a. "As for me, your teacher, you are without sin.
- b. "Don't claim that I am close-minded.
- c. "I give you my blessing. Please, come closer.
- d. "Come and I will take this opportunity to chant the Dhamma."

284.

- a. The Abbot held a fan to block his face.
- b. Hearing him chant, gave them great pleasure.
- c. "May they have long lives and true happiness.
- d. "May their happiness be plentiful and give You merit."

285.

- a. "May they have strength
- b. "And attain high rank, money and wealth.
- c. "May their strength and intelligence not diminish,
- d. "And may their wives be young and pure."

286.

- a. "May they have famous reputations which spread their power
- b. "So that others respect and fear them. May both men and women
- c. "Everywhere take care of them, especially those in the territory
- d. "Of the district where Miss Teav lives, so they may arrive there to govern."

287.

- a. The students were both fulfilled.
- b. Their worries were now gone and they were completely satisfied.
- c. There is nothing to which this can be compared.
- d. It was actually as though they had gone to heaven.

288.

- a. Afterwards, Tum and Pech bent down and listened to the Abbot
- b. As he gave them his blessing.
- c. They raised their hands to bid him goodbye,
- d. And descended from the Abbot's quarters and hurriedly walked away.

289.

- a. Tum and Pech climbed up the steps to Tum's house and sat down.
- b. Tum told his mother, "Now,
- c. "Mother, we have decided that the time is right
- d. "To make the journey to Tbong Kmom. Mother,"

290.

- a. "Is the way open for me go, or will you prevent me
- b. "From meeting our schedule over there?
- c. "The Abbot says if I am to have inner peace
- d. "And happiness, I must be free to go."

291.

- a. "Although Tum's mother wanted to prevent him from going,
- b. "She said, "My child,
- c. "Your mother everyday seems not very
- d. "Healthy due to having contracted an illness.

292.

- a. "Being old, the time has come to earn merit before I die
- b. "And seek out the support of family.
- c. "It's not as though you are a child. Taking care of you does not require discipline.
- d. "I will not delay the time of your departure."

293.

- a. She said, "You have set the exact time of your departure.
- b. "Once you leave, there will be no stopping you.
- c. "It would only be a waste of valuable time.
- d. "You be careful of damaging your mother's good name."

294.

- a. As soon as Tum and Pech realized the situation, the two
- b. Were both equally happy.
- c. In their state of pure and extreme elation,
- d. Whatever worries they may have felt were now gone.

295.

- a. Pech and Tum met together.
- b. Turning toward one another, the dear friends conversed,
- c. "We must get going, friend.
- d. "There is no time to waste.

296.

- a. "We must proceed victoriously.
- b. "To have success we cannot be afraid. This is our time of glory.
- c. "With supernatural or earthly power,
- d. "All can be reduced to nothing.

297.

- a. "The crow's foot that is not clean will lose its possessions.
- b. "To start out on the wrong day brings misery.
- c. "We must go on zero-two or zero-four.
- d. "We must go when everything is just right."

298.

- a. Tum and Pech were completely satisfied with the time
- b. They had decided was best to start off.
- c. When the morning light clearly dawned,
- d. Then the two would leave.

***Part 3 (299-354): Tum's and Pech's Return to Tbong Kmom***

(Tum and Pech's journey to Tbong Kmom; the terrifying night in the forest; the children along the road; the soldier; their arrival at their adopted mother's house in Tbong Kmom.)

299.

- a. As Tum and Pech followed the road along the rice field,
- b. They noticed relatives walking quickly after them. They turned around
- c. And the entire family saluted them.
- d. An aunt said, "Greetings!

300.

- a. "We all bid farewell to you that leave for Tbong Kmom!"
- b. "Dear aunt," Tum said, "Don't cry. I'm not
- c. "Abandoning our village. I will return as usual.
- d. "Aunt, I would not leave my mother for good.

301.

- a. "But I feel sympathy for my brothers and sisters,
- b. "Who, according to what I've heard, need my help and care.
- c. "I'm afraid a disease has afflicted them,
- d. "Spreading a debilitating sickness."

302.

- a. The family of Tum and Pech evasively answered,
- b. "Oh, nephew! What happened to your face to make it yellow!"
- c. They turned away startled and went back quickly.
- d. Sorrow for Teav like water washed over Tum.

303.

- a. As soon as the two young men had bid goodbye to their families,
- b. They got back on the road to the district of Tbong Kmom.
- c. After walking a while, they hesitated, missing their village.
- d. Pech and Tum felt sick at heart.

304.

- a. Just as Tum reached a wooded glade,
- b. Incessant longings for Teav tied his stomach in knots.
- c. Tears flowed as he thought of his sweetheart.
- d. "Oh, Teav! My thoughts for you are beyond words!"

305.

- a. They arrived at a field of reeds, fallen and sprouting.
- b. The white flowers, creeping and sparkling bright
- c. Were like the shining body of his beloved.
- d. Like the reeds' healing flowers, he longed for her so much.

306.

- a. Glimpsing the deep waters and the *trakeat* grass,
- b. Tum addressed Teav, "My heart is perplexed.
- c. "The *trakuon* plant is like my body. I must stop to lie down.
- d. "I will stop in the shade of the branches of the wild guava.

307.

- a. "The *yeaplong*, like me, has become dislocated and far removed from home.
- b. "To this sad forest it has come, so long separated from its bamboo grove.
- c. "It misses home always,
- d. "Just as I miss you, Teav. I'm afraid just to think about it!"

308.

- a. Then the two young men reached the forest.
- b. By morning, we observe Tum's sadness increasing.
- c. Tum is listing the names of the trees cleverly,
- d. As Pech reaches to pull down the branch of fruit tree because he is thirsty and hungry.

309.

- a. As Pech picks the succulent fruit to eat,
- b. Tum keeps thinking about Teav and says, "Oh, Pech! There are
- c. "*Puoch* fruits like the time Miss Teav dared to give me the *pahom*.
- d. "It seemed that she wanted to show her love for me.

310.

- a. "Look, there are sandalwood, litchi fruits and plums.
- b. "They are like Miss Teav who clearly misses her sweetheart
- c. "And whose dreamy imaginings she cannot reveal.
- d. "Like the moon, the fruit falls far from the tree.

311.

- a. "The *srakhom* has died.
- b. "Its downfall is a result of wrong conduct. Observe the mango tree!
- c. "Observe the monkeys in groups jumping quickly.
- d. "Because their loved ones are far away, they call out.



312.

- a. "Their calls are really
- b. "Vessels of Miss Teav. They ask, 'Why is it
- c. 'That you left? You should try to borrow
- d. 'Someone's buffalo and thunder back to take her away.'

313.

- a. "I see there are fruits ripe and green.
- b. "The wild mangoes are scattered here and there just as I am separated from
- c. "My sweetheart. But my limbs move straight ahead.
- d. "The desire inside me will never forget her.

314.

- a. "I see the vine pleased with its clinging fruit.
- b. "It is like Teav's love. I can never turn away from
- c. "The token of her love." Tum and Pech
- d. Were now moving right along, but had not emerged from the forest.

315.

- a. "Far from the long rice fields, I am disheartened.
- b. "It's as though I think this way because of the cicada.
- c. "As the insects keep crying more and more, your Tum becomes  
obsessed with
- d. "Hallucinations that it is afternoon already.

316.

- a. "It is afternoon and we have overshot the main road.
- b. "Whether we have gone right or not,
- c. "We've been a long time in the forest. Hey, Pech!" Tum said aloud,
- d. "Let's look for a place to rest and cool ourselves off."

317.

- a. Pech answered, "If we do like that
- b. "We should look for some clearing that is safe.
- c. "We have to be careful. I'm afraid there are tigers crouched in hiding!
- d. "If they attack us, we're done for!

318.

- a. "Keep going. Stopping to make camp here doesn't make sense.
- b. "You're acting foolish because a woman has got you in a tizzy. Try to hold on!"
- c. Pech and Tum talked it over. Then they decided
- d. To climb a tall tree.

319.

- a. When they reached a branch where they could sleep,
- b. They lied down without fear.
- c. But upon hearing the sounds of animals calling, Tum quietly listened,
- d. Ready himself. For some time,

320.

- a. Tum glanced up at the moon,
- b. Shining a clear and radiant light. It was perhaps
- c. Ten o'clock, deep in the middle of the night.
- d. Thinking of this and that, Tum quietly nodded off to sleep.

321.

- a. The wind blew quiet and cool,
- b. Refreshing the air as falling dew crackled on the leaves
- c. It sprinkled down in front of him, soaking
- d. And saturating the *oulaok* and *baeng* trees.

322.

- a. The sounds of all the animals' nostalgic cries
- b. Answering each other transfixed Tum as he listened to the melodies.
- c. Pech and Tum, feeling afraid,
- d. Became very worried.

323.

- a. Pech said, "Oh, we shouldn't have
- b. "Come to sleep in the forest just because you were worried about your  
sweetheart!
- c. "Animals of every kind surround us!
- d. "It is quite obvious that this is not right!

324.

- a. "If someone is dignified, he should live in a dignified way.
- b. "If someone is defiant and opposes tradition,
- c. "He will receive ridicule and be accused noisily,
- d. "Especially for being willing to die for a woman!

325.

- a. "Sad one, the Abbot for a long time said
- b. "That you will bring hardship to your family.
- c. "But because you have been an adequate student, he was willing
- d. "To offer his blessing straight from his heart.

326.

- a. "Word will reach the Abbot that you have been stupid.
- b. "In the dark, you walked and slept in the jungle.
- c. "If we kill ourselves meaninglessly in the forest,
- d. "The Abbot will be sick with regret and sorrow."

327.

- a. At that time, the danger of the nighttime ended.
- b. In the clear morning light, they could see everything in the distance.
- c. It was time to move and get out of there.
- d. Walking away they emerged from the forest and arrived at the road.

328.

- a. Tum and Pech had fled the forest and spotted a village.
- b. When they neared some houses at the outskirts of the village,
- c. They went closer to ask for rice and food.
- d. When they finished eating as much as they wanted,

329.

- a. They left the people of the village and went on.
- b. Passing along, they heard male
- c. And female birds perched in the trees.
- d. Tum, having something to say, addressed Pech,

330.

- a. "Brother, look at the birds' erratic flight.
- b. "The brown owl timidly flies, testing new wings from out of the tress.
- c. "The dove flies to its nest in the bamboo stand.
- d. "The *popaech* swoop out of the *popuel* tree,

331.

- a. "And the parrot cries." Tum could stop worrying
- b. About Teav, his beloved, with whom he was not yet united,
- c. And to whom he had not yet returned. Was Miss Teav still
- d. Willing to wait for him?

332.

- a. Like an enraged lunatic, Tum pressed on.
- b. Though anguished by the journey, he surged ahead
- c. To reach Teav to find out whether she missed him
- d. With all her heart or not.

333.

- a. Continuing on in the same direction, they arrived
- b. At an area where the main road was very near.
- c. Seeing some children, they called to them, but they did not reply.
- d. They urged them adamantly to speak.

334.

- a. The children were all friends,
- b. And their bodies smelled of water buffalo dung.
- c. Tum and Pech said, "You there!
- d. "You don't need to be afraid of anything at all!

335.

- a. "We want to hire you for money.
- b. "We won't leave anyone out.
- c. "Let's get all of you to prepare yourselves.
- d. "Now, children! When I ask you something you should tell me the answer!"

336.

- a. The children finally opened their mouths and said, "What do you want to ask?"
- b. "If you want to know something, you had better keep your word"
- c. "Clearly and follow through on your promise."
- d. "We're frightened by the sound of you're voice."

337.

- a. Tum and Pech stepped forward
- b. And said, "Boys, are we going in the right direction"
- c. "To go to the house of the good and kind Miss Teav?"
- d. "It's very far!" the boys answered. "But if you hurry you can get there before long."

338.

- a. "Does Miss Teav have a husband already or no?" Tum asked the boys.
- b. "Tell me directly, just as you know."
- c. "Tell me everything honestly according to your idea."
- d. "Or is she still single and unattached?"

339.

- a. The children replied clearly,
- b. "Miss Teav's house, if you keep to the populated areas,
- c. "Is only as far as the amount of time it will take the sun
- d. "To fall past its zenith. By then you will arrive."

340.

- a. "She has only a widowed mother who is pretty.
- b. "And she has a servant who is devoted to her.
- c. "The servant is a religious person who wants do the right thing.
- d. "She is even tempered and believes in following through on whatever she does.

341.

- a. "She treats Teav as a child and gives her free time,
- b. "While she waits for her at home. She has lived there
- c. "As Teav's nanny free of resentment.
- d. "She is happy and has no faults.

342.

- a. "We have told you the real situation.
- b. "There are family far and wide or close friends,
- c. "Who could tell you and let you know this as well.
- d. "Our desire is to be clear and not disappoint you."

343.

- a. Tum spoke to the children playfully,
- b. "Ah, you boys! We came here to pray
- c. "To the gods that Teav will know the medicine for infertility
- d. "Gray hair, sprained bones, hernias, blistered skin and blenorrea!"



344.

- a. As soon as Tum and Pech had spoke,
- b. The children scattered
- c. And rushed back to the village. Tum and Pech thought a moment,
- d. Then Tum said, "Which way Pech to Teav's house?"

345.

- a. "Don't worry, Pech answered,
- b. "And don't rush things. Be wary of other people.
- c. "They will be angry and blame Teav's family because they will guess
- d. "We are looking for the house where Miss Teav stays."

346.

- a. "Since we are here, let's go to our adopted mother.
- b. "She will explain the way things work here.
- c. "Surely, she will remember
- d. "Our happy faces from the last time we met and needed help."

347.

- a. After talking together, Tum and Pech forged ahead.
- b. They came upon a soldier, and Tum veered to avoid him.
- c. He didn't dare ask him anything, afraid he might give them a hard time.
- d. Thinking it over, Tum turned around thinking he knew him, though he wasn't sure.

348.

- a. Then Tum raised his hands in greeting to ask,
- b. "Please excuse me, sir.
- c. "One of those houses is my adopted mother's. It cannot hide from me.
- d. "I used to depend on staying there."

349.

- a. As soon as Tum had finished, the soldier replied,
- b. "That's right, go down the road,
- c. "The small path traversed by the fence,
- d. "Until you get to the house. It will be truly clear to you!"

350.

- a. Pech and Tum bid farewell. Arriving,
- b. They recognized the house definitely. It was not long at all
- c. Before they called out and their adopted mother happily replied,
- d. "Oh, children! You've been gone so long. Seldom do you come here!"

351.

- a. Tum and Pech, happy to see her, bustled up to the house.
- b. Raising their hands in salute, they bowed together.
- c. The woman who was their adopted mother sat close to them
- d. And asked them many questions.

352.

- a. When she asked about their parents in the village,
- b. Tum said, "Mother looks ahead but doesn't dare to hate me."
- c. Then their adopted mother spoke as though she were choking,
- d. "So you begin by coming to double check the situation here?"

353.

- a. Tum answered saying, "I ask you respectfully
- b. "To be quiet until I explain everything to you.
- c. "I ask of you, mother,
- d. "Not to feel anxious as I speak.

354.

- a. "The lying and concealing of truth,
- b. "Which up to now I have relied upon, has been because of Miss Teav.
- c. "She promised her love and offered as evidence
- d. "A container of tobacco leaves wrapped in a *pahom*."

**Part 4 (355-391): Teav's Arranged Marriage To the Governor's Son**

(The arranged marriage between Teav and the Governor's son; Teav's unwillingness to cooperate; her mother's anger at her refusal to marry into wealth and status.)

355.

- a. We will stop and digress from
- b. The story of Pech and Tum and go to Tbong Kmom
- c. And talk about the endeavors of Ah Chun,
- d. Who is meeting with his wife.

356.

- a. He says to her, "Hey, wife! Our son who is so special to us,
- b. "We must guard him because I have rank.
- c. "There are wealthy children
- d. "Among the elite who line up in great numbers to meet him.

357.

- a. "I have heard all the people clearly
- b. "Speaking outright and with a kind of certainty,
- c. "Spreading gossip that there is someone of suitable rank for our son.
- d. "The child's appearance is as attractive as our Guon as well."

358.

- a. "That girl has a widowed mother only,
- b. "But all the possessions she desires.
- c. "She actually has a servant to wash her feet.
- d. "Her complete attributes will last until she is old!"

359.

- a. His wife listened attentively to him.
- b. She believed that the girl's suitability was not yet clear.
- c. She addressed her husband saying, "Sir,
- d. "I detect bad intentions.

360.

- a. "We must think before arranging our son's marriage with someone's child.
- b. "A girl or a river, by having a body,
- c. "Has greedy intentions. We must think before giving Murn Guon
- d. "To spend all the years, months and days of his life with her."

361.

- a. Ah Chhun reflected as he listened to
- b. His wife express her suspicions.
- c. Then he said, "Dear wife,
- d. "I have heard from people

362.

- a. "And others
- b. "Who come to meet with me
- c. "That there is nothing but praise for Teav's beauty
- d. "In the countryside.

363.

- a. "If our dear child is enamored with this girl,
- b. "We should empathize with our beloved son.
- c. "In that case, it would be appropriate for us to plan the breads, sweets
- d. "And various foods like fish and meats that we will need.

364.

- a. "Then identify someone who is clearly knowledgeable
- b. And truly has knowledge of philosophy,
- c. "Who puts things cleverly, and is used to negotiating
- d. "Persistently and skillfully and knows how to be eloquent.

365.

- a. "He must be able to explain things to the girl's side
- b. "And acting as our go-between follow tradition
- c. "To inform the mother
- d. "Of Miss Teav and relate whatever conditions they may have."

366.

- a. The wife of Ah Chhun undertook the matter of gifts immediately,
- b. Gathering them together quickly as in a single motion.
- c. She took all the foodstuffs and wrapped them to keep fresh.
- d. When she had prepared the gifts completely, she sent them on their way.

367.

- a. The go-between and his helpers departed over-loaded with gifts down the road.
- b. Despite serious efforts to keep straight, they twisted and turned
- c. As they tried to speed up, beating the oxen across the hills and plains,
- d. Forests and jungle while trying to keep an eye on where they were going.

368.

- a. Looking ahead,
- b. They saw someone who clearly was Teav's mother. Without a doubt,
- c. These were not ordinary people. When
- d. They had come close enough for Teav's mother to know who they were,

369.

- a. She scurried down from the house
- b. And spoke as would befit an in-law,
- c. Saying, "Sirs, welcome! Come in!
- d. "Do you intend to travel far?

370.

- a. "Or is it that you come looking for me?
- b. "Please, would you kindly explain.
- c. "Let me know your business. Explain everything
- d. "Clearly and don't keep anything back.

371.

- a. Everyone had reached the house.
- b. Teav's mother, very happy, had just arranged a wooden tray.
- c. Bread was put on a copper serving table and quickly brought in.
- d. The visitors climbed the stairs to the house, raised joined hands in greeting

372.

- a. And said, "We come in good faith
- b. "To perform our responsibilities as best we can.
- c. "If we act improperly, we respectfully apologize.
- d. "If we seem proud or rude in any way, please forgive us.

373.

- a. "For the Governor together with his wife
- b. "All two, all three, have given word
- c. "To instruct us to deliver these gifts
- d. "In the hope of securing your sympathies.



374.

- a. "They form a kind of road or bridge across which to step quickly.
- b. "We politely inquire, Madame, what would you say
- c. "To this offer to engage your child? For it would be of great moment
- d. "If your daughter were to exchange vows with Murn Guon, the Governor's son."

375.

- a. Teav's widowed mother listened,
- b. Quite taken by the offer. Enthralled,
- c. She managed to say, "How flattering!
- d. "Sir, by all rights, she is a treasure!

376.

- a. "I do my best every day, but it is difficult still.
- b. "They come in droves. It seems relentless."
- c. "But, I must say, my child is busy!
- d. "Even relatives want to come for her hand, many at a time!"

377.

- a. "I don't know yet if it's appropriate that relations
- b. "Proceed with the Governor
- c. "Because we are commoners. We should restrain ourselves.
- d. "It is quite unexpected, to have been called upon by a member of the elite."

378.

- a. "His Excellency, Ah Chhun, is too important!
- b. "Usually, beneath the sky everything is lower than a mountain.
- c. "Those who have power don't ask.
- d. "They simply cut, stab and beat someone without mercy.

379.

- a. "It's only right that I inform our relatives before making any decisions.
- b. "Go offer my respects to the Governor and his wife,
- c. "And tell them that before we form relations,
- d. "It is necessary that I consult my daughter."

380.

- a. The go-between remembered everything Teav's mother said.
- b. Then she lifted the foodstuffs that were the gifts
- c. And presented them to her. After, she bowed her body
- d. Respectfully and raised her hands in salute.

381.

- a. The entourage started back to the Governor's residence.
- b. Everyone bid goodbye to Teav's mother
- c. And set off to inform Ah Chhun and his wife of what had happened,
- d. Committing everything to memory exactly.

382.

- a. Afterwards, as for
- b. Teav's mother, she rushed around overjoyed.
- c. Seeing the breads and foodstuffs set on the table in trays,
- d. She quickly put them away for safe keeping.

383.

- a. Then she addressed her child. "My dear,
- b. "We should be happy!" she said her face aglow.
- c. "I am giving you in marriage to the Governor's son,
- d. "So we can have the happiness that rank and wealth affords!

384.

- a. "We will have daunting power! We will have status!
- b. "Accordingly, your rank will rise!
- c. "I am talking to you! Don't be proud
- d. "And impudent! Show that you value your mother!"

385.

- a. As Teav heard her mother tell her to remember her place,
- b. She became utterly afraid.
- c. Then, having something to say, she said, "Oh, mother!
- d. "I, who am your child, regret these gifts of rice and food.

386.

- a. "If you want to make an arrangement with them,
- b. "Offer one of your children who are free. You have other boys and girls
- c. "To offer to them. Whether you choose number two or three,
- d. "It's up to you to give them in marriage. Why must it be me?"

387.

- a. Teav's mother listened to Teav's stubborn refusal.
- b. "It's not wrong at all that I dare answer, 'Mother, don't!'
- c. "You should arrange your child's marriage with her interests in mind.
- d. "When you see a powerful person, you offer me without my consent!"

388.

- a. The mother waited to hear Teav speak, then responded
- b. Telling her, "Oh, Teav! You should calm down
- c. "And control your emotions. You are not looking ahead.
- d. "Calm down first. Don't argue me into a corner.

389.

- a. "Be careful you don't destroy everything with your recklessness.
- b. "A chicken's egg will come to have worries
- c. "As it rolls straight for a stone and breaks into a million pieces.
- d. "If you persist in cornering me, you will push me over the edge!

390.

- a. "In our tradition, you would be compared to
- b. "The child who doesn't listen and is obstinate.
- c. "They take this kind of person to show
- d. "How those who are stubborn and difficult become outcasts.

391.

- a. "It never happens Teav that the cake
- b. "Can be bigger than the mold.
- c. "The baby water buffalo that refuses to follow its mother through the jungle
- d. "When it is on fire will surely meet its death."

***Part 5 (392-442): The Consummation of Tum's and  
Teav's Love***

(Tum's seduction of Teav; Tum's stay at Teav's house at her mother's invitation.)

392.

- a. So ends this digression to depict
- b. Teav's mother's outbursts. To continue,
- c. We will speak of Tum who remains
- d. Utterly grief-stricken.

393.

- a. For comparison, here is an example of Tum's feelings.
- b. When he met with Pech, who was now completely recovered,
- c. He said, "Brother Pech, we have come
- d. "To stay here many days. My endurance

394.

- a. "Is almost broken. My insides are scattered in pieces.
- b. "My sorrow is due to leaving Miss Teav for so long.
- c. "I've yet to meet with my sweetheart.
- d. "Here, a moment is like being separated many days.

395.

- a. "Pech, let me go or let me die!
- b. "How many more nights must I be without her, Pech!
- c. "Don't delay any longer!
- d. "Answer! Try to understand!

396.

- a. "If I don't have Teav,
- b. "It will be the end of me!
- c. "When I see her in my dreams,
- d. "I cannot think of anything else!

397.

- a. "I dedicate myself completely to my precious!
- b. "The limits of my body are like a hare
- c. "That has taken shelter in a thicket high and far.
- d. "Falling, it scatters its cares away."

398.

- a. Pech listened to Tum. Approaching him,
- b. He replied, "Now, brother Tum, I agree you should go.
- c. "But you must be careful. I fear that along the road
- d. "There are enemies devising tricks to end your life.

399.

- a. "Don't worry yourself about her too much. Women speak in riddles.
- b. "One type can be fickle.
- c. "They say, 'We want to be your wife,'
- d. "Then they become disinterested and you die meaninglessly."

400.

- a. Tum listened to Pech's words of advice
- b. And said, "Yes, this is wise.
- c. "But, brother, don't think that she is like any other girl.
- d. "I am willing to die for her.

401.

- a. "Miss Teav is absolutely good, and I love her.
- b. "Her heart is joined with mine. She even dared to engage me
- c. "With the *pahom* and send a message proposing our union.
- d. "We fell in love because Teav is devoted to me."

402.

- a. When Pech and Tum finished talking,
- b. Tum said goodbye to Pech and left. Wanting to meet Teav badly,
- c. He asked himself, "Oh, dearest sweetheart so fine!
- d. "Have you forgotten me already or do you still await my return?"

403.

- a. Thinking thus, Tum walked on by himself.
- b. He began to feel sad and alone halfway down the road.
- c. Melancholy thoughts pursued him,
- d. As he walked closer and closer to Teav's house.

404.

- a. At that time, Teav's mother was not at home.
- b. She had gone walking long before.
- c. Tum arrived and stopped in front of the house and stood there weary of going further.
- d. Teav, seeing someone, said, "Sister Noe..."



405.

- a. "Sister, go and tell that person to let himself be seen clearly.
- b. "I am afraid he has a problem. What did he come here for?"
- c. Noe heard Teav tell her this and went out quickly.
- d. "You there! What do you want? Please come closer, so we can see you."

406.

- a. Tum had been listening to their conversation out of view.
- b. Upon hearing Noe call him directly, Tum got up
- c. And approached the house. Then Noe, wondering,
- d. Asked, "What business brought you here?"

407.

- a. Tum listened to Noe's question.
- b. Tum replied in a way that was familiar,
- c. "I have come looking for Teav, Miss,
- d. "Because Miss Teav promised herself to me."

408.

- a. Noe answered, "Sir, this is very strange!
- b. "You are quite mixed up in the head!"
- c. Then Tum said, "Mixed up about what? Don't be so suspicious.
- d. "You have seen me chant for everyone to hear.

409.

- a. "Now you act as though you don't recognize me!
- b. "But I have proof right here in my hand.
- c. "Teav wished me to have this scarf and container.
- d. "She wanted me to disrobe quickly and told me not to be long in returning.

410.

- a. Teav, hearing Tum's words spoken that way,
- b. Got goose bumps and felt butterflies in her stomach that didn't subside.
- c. She opened the door and came outside saying, "Dear sir!
- d. "You even dared to bring the scarf as evidence!

411.

- a. "Who told you that stuff about the scarf?
- b. "Did they have you come here to make us worried?"
- c. Tum said, "Since I have the scarf from your hand directly,
- d. "What I said should not make you surprised. It's your own doing."

412.

- a. Teav said, "Who would have the gumption
- b. "To be so in awe of the words he dares to speak?
- c. "You may as well turn back home and quickly!
- d. "Don't stay and do anything that is unbecoming!"

413.

- a. Tum said, "What kind of person would be so easily fooled
- b. "Into going back and what's more allow himself to become separated
- c. "Before having his sweetheart? Don't wave me away.
- d. "Let's join together as one, not be broken apart."

414.

- a. Teav said, "You compare me to a flower,
- b. "While you are like a bumble bee
- c. "That flies around and spotting the flower enters straight away.
- d. "Afterwards, it doesn't delay and is soon on its way again."

415.

- a. Tum said, "I am like the lion king,
- b. "While Miss Teav is like a large cave.
- c. "If the lion king has a place to live,
- d. "He will never allow himself to leave."

416.

- a. Teav said, "I am like a dock,
- b. "While you, so charming, are like a boat.
- c. "You are quick to park a while, precious one,
- d. "Then hurry away without a second thought."

417.

- a. Tum said, "Oh, I am like a large fish,
- b. "While you, young Teav, are like a river.
- c. "The fish that has deep water swims leisurely from side to side.
- d. "Don't, dear! Don't reject me or be suspicious."

418.

- a. Teav said, "I am like a tree,
- b. "While you are like a sarika bird that perches there every day.
- c. "You stop to perch and take shelter,
- d. "Then fly off at great speed to go to some other place."

419.

- a. Tum said, "I am like a tiger,
- b. "While you, dear, are like the jungle.
- c. "Usually a tiger doesn't turn away quickly.
- d. "He avoids leaving behind his precious forest."

420.

- a. "I am like tree trunk used as a hive,
- b. "While you, handsome sir, are like the bees
- c. "That come there to live then fly off one day,
- d. "Leaving the tree trunk defiled and useless."

421.

- a. Tum said, "I am like an elephant,
- b. "While you, young lady, are like sugar cane.
- c. "Once the elephant tastes the sweetness, he never goes
- d. "Far from the sugar cane, dear!"

422.

- a. Teav said, "Oh, dear sir!
- b. "Who would not be suspicious
- c. "Of the words of a man trying to show off his intelligence?
- d. "So don't tell me not to be suspicious."

423.

- a. As Teav spoke wisely,
- b. Tum had no fear at all. He grabbed Teav's hand
- c. And kissed her saying, "Oh, my dear,
- d. "Do you still doubt me? Do you still not believe how I feel?"

424.

- a. Teav was furious that Tum should be so disrespectful
- b. As to grab her hand and harass her without consideration.
- c. "Think of it! You should be ashamed of yourself! How could I
- d. "Admire someone who would dare to barge in here this way?

425.

- a. "How dare you come here and kiss my cheek and even touch my breast!"
- b. "Someone who is not afraid of anything doesn't please me!"
- c. Tum said, "I'm sorry if I was wrong! Please let me, my dear,
- d. "Love you forever and ever!"

426.

- a. Miss Noe, Teav's nanny, seeing the situation,
- b. Left quickly without a word,
- c. Afraid Teav would be embarrassed by her presence.
- d. Teav was ready to give her love to Tum.

427.

- a. Tum hugged Teav in his arms playfully.
- b. Neither of them was afraid to consummate their love.
- c. Inside a comfortable house like that
- d. The young woman became easily aroused with passion.

428.

- a. Teav willingly let Tum come close to her.
- b. Tum, impassioned, kissed Teav's face.
- c. They told each other that
- d. They would exchange spit-up areca. Then Teav said,

429.

- a. "Dearest, I am afraid that you
- b. "Have put all your love in this embrace,
- c. "And that afterwards you will leave and abandon me!
- d. "My dear, have pity on me!"

430.

- a. Tum kissed and comforted his precious sweetheart,
- b. Saying, "Oh, my dear, love of my life,
- c. "I will not let go of your hand, my sweet.
- d. "I give myself to you for my entire life,"

431.

- a. "Because you have merit as big as Mount
- b. "Meru , enormous, overshadowing the continent,
- c. "While I am short like an imitation necklace,
- d. "The life of someone sent to serve King Reamea."

432.

- a. Teav said, "I am like a star,
- b. "While you, dear love, are like the moon.
- c. "The star shines in the sky,
- d. "Accompanying the moon and never parting."

433.

- a. "Oh, Tum! Night has fallen.
- b. "May our love-making continue until midnight.
- c. "Wish that we will be together in every life,
- d. "Never to part, never to stray from each other from now on."

434.

- a. They heard the voice of Teav's mother
- b. Who had just come back home from the temple ceremony.
- c. Didn't Teav know enough
- d. To get Tum outside at once?

435.

- a. Teav's mother had given Noe to understand full well
- b. That Teav was in the shade and should have no mark on her reputation.
- c. Teav's mother arrived at the house as planned.
- d. The male and female servants arrived with her as well.

436.

- a. Teav's mother saw Tum. She went up to him and asked,
- b. "Sir, where are you coming from? Your appearance here makes me wonder."
- c. Tum said, "I came from far away.
- d. "I just arrived yesterday."



437.

- a. Teav's mother questioned Tum further, wanting to know his plans.
- b. "How many days before you return?"
- c. Tum said, "I came here looking to buy
- d. "Things for water buffalo and horses. To avoid bothering anyone,

438.

- a. "Since we came from far away together, the two of us
- b. "Have been staying at the residence,
- c. "The house of someone we have known for a while.
- d. "Previously, I chanted for her."

439.

- a. Teav's mother knew clearly what to do. As though it were no imposition at all,
- b. She requested Tum to stay at her house. Then she called Teav to tell
- c. Her that she would stay downstairs for however long or short a time necessary.
- d. Tum's appearance was already one of being pleased and not afraid.

440.

- a. Teav's mother then prepared a mat and pillow.
- b. After completing the preparations, she went to tell
- c. Her daughter where she would sleep.
- d. "We must make a place for the Venerable."

441.

- a. During that time, when the handsome Tum
- b. Was with Teav, they made love
- c. With hearts full of passion.
- d. For many days, they kept their love a secret.

442.

- a. Tum forgot about his home and didn't think of
- b. Pech. The two lovers
- c. Were not bothered by evil thoughts.
- d. They were perfectly content to be alone together.

***Part 6 (443-446): The Governor's Son's Courtship of Teav***

(Murn Guon's courtship of Teav; Teav's silence)

443.

- a. Later on, word arrived from Murn Guon,
- b. The son of Ah Chhun, that he had gold and silver
- c. To bring to gain favor with the adorable Teav.
- d. He assumed Teav had been loyal to him.

444.

- a. He didn't know about Teav's mother's strategy. She made it appear
- b. That Teav had love for him. Murn Guon
- c. Was so impressed with her he said, "Sweetheart,
- d. "You are the best in the world!

445.

- a. "If you agree in your heart,
- b. "I will take care of you as husband and wife.
- c. "Don't let there be any others.
- d. "I alone will take care of you, my dear."

446.

- a. Murn Guon came and went not daring to miss a day.
- b. Teav's mother treated him as one who is loved greatly.
- c. Miss Teav did not act reluctant or doubtful.
- d. She stifled herself and didn't speak.

**Part 7 (447-531): Tum's Summoning By the King And Separation From Teav**

(Tum's and Pech's recruitment into the Royal Orchestra by King Reamea; Tum's separation from Teav; Tum's and Pech's journey to inform their families and the Abbot of the King's demand; Teav's sadness; Tum's and Pech's sad journey down river to the King's Palace; Tum's title of "Murn Iek.")

447.

- a. Having come this far,
- b. We will stop to digress briefly
- c. And describe the King
- d. Who dwelled in the royal city.

448.

- a. The King who lived in the Cambodian capital
- b. Was named King Reamea. His power was tremendous,
- c. And nearly all the people were safe and content.
- d. The capital where the King lived was the citadel of Lovek.

449.

- a. There was a wall surrounding the royal Palace
- b. That was beautifully decorated and very tall.
- c. There were official quarters to house the dancers
- d. That were especially wonderful, like being in heaven.

450.

- a. The King had a royal queen
- b. Who was attractive, adorable and virtuous.
- c. She had every attribute and inestimable grace,
- d. And didn't have any kind of disease.

451.

- a. The entire Royal Court,
- b. As well as the army generals,
- c. Were at the King's service
- d. And dependent upon King Reamea.

452.

- a. There were the royal stables for the King's swift horses
- b. And beautiful carriages under the direction of the elephant keeper.
- c. There were countless items for amusement
- d. And practically every valuable available for making religious offerings.

453.

- a. At that time, Tum's reputation
- b. In the province of Tbong Kmom as an intelligent young man was spreading.
- c. It was said he knew how to combine singing with stories of all kinds.
- d. In that part of the world, no one could compare to him.

454.

- a. In addition, there was Pech,
- b. Who was accomplished at playing entertaining music.
- c. After hearing of the reputations of the two young men,
- d. The King wanted to meet them.

455.

- a. He commanded to have
- b. Tum and Pech brought before him.
- c. He dispatched a royal servant with the order
- d. Stating his wish and that it be executed quickly.

456.

- a. The servant bowed respectfully.
- b. After receiving the command, he turned on his heels
- c. And rushed to his destination.
- d. Finding Ah Chhun, he relayed the King's demand.

457.

- a. Ah Chhun received the message with a nod,
- b. Then dispatched the servant to depart quickly
- c. And get Pech and Tum without delay,
- d. As the King had ordered.

458.

- a. When Tum and Pech were brought to the Governor's residence,
- b. They approached Ah Chhun and saluted.
- c. Ah Chhun told them that the King
- d. Had ordered that they deliver themselves before him.

459.

- a. Pech and Tum saluted without argument,
- b. Saying, "We will do our best to leave tomorrow.
- c. "But we need time to get our personal belongings together.
- d. "Governor, please understand and show pity.

460.

- a. The servant of the King said, "We sympathize with you.
- b. "Handle this as you like. We won't say anything.
- c. "But you must be quick and make haste,
- d. "Because the King demands your presence as soon as possible."

461.

- a. At that time, Tum and Pech
- b. Knew the situation clearly. They turned to leave
- c. And bid goodbye to Ah Chun, then returned to Teav's house
- d. To tell all that had occurred to Miss Teav.

462.

- a. "Oh, Teav! Because there has been a royal command
- b. "Right from the King himself
- c. "Ordering me to present myself before him immediately,
- d. "I ask to leave you, my dear."

463.

- a. Teav answered, "Oh, my dear,
- b. "My sorrow is endless. I am devastated.
- c. "I cannot bare it.
- d. "The implacable sadness inside me does not relent."

464.

- a. Tum said, "Oh, my dear sweetheart.
- b. "Everyday I have held you in my arms.
- c. "Starting tomorrow, we will be separated from each other.
- d. "Oh, Teav, don't worry."

465.

- a. Teav said, "Oh, my sorrow is so strong!
- b. "It doesn't have an outlet to go anywhere.
- c. "I am being separated from the love of my life!"
- d. Teav tried to grab some items to prepare a keepsake.



466.

- a. She took a cloth and betel leaves rolled into cigarettes
- b. And packed them into a new box and gave it to Tum.
- c. She kept reminding Tum, "Dear,
- d. "After you get there, prepare to return as soon as possible.

467.

- a. "Come back to get me, dear.
- b. "I'll be here withering away to nothing."
- c. Tum held her in his arms and kissed her face.
- d. He clung to Teav, his beloved.

468.

- a. When the day dawned clearly,
- b. Tum and Pech adorned and dressed themselves then went straight to
- c. The servant of the King, honest and true.
- d. Before the two young men started off,

469.

- a. Tum thought to address the King's servant.
- b. "At this point, I ask you, sir,
- c. "To escort me to Ba Phnom, so I may inform my mother
- d. "As well as the Abbot and my relatives of the King's command.

470.

- a. The servant listened, then without pause
- b. Said, "I can escort you as you wish
- c. "To let you bid goodbye to your mother and relatives.
- d. "That way your absence will not worry them.

471.

- a. They began to traverse the jungle of Tbong Kmom province,
- b. Listening to the birds in flight call as they returned to their nesting places.
- c. Hearing a male and a female, two together, crying sadly,
- d. Tum imagined that it was like Teav in his embrace.

472.

- a. Tum said, "Oh, Teav, my beloved,
- b. "Today you and I are separated truly.
- c. "We cannot meet, my beloved.
- d. "It is indeed as though my darling is orphaned."

473.

- a. Walking didn't relieve his sadness, and Tum become stiff and tight.
- b. Taking in the sights along the road,
- c. Tum recited the names of the various trees
- d. Growing on the sides of the road in long rows.

474.

- a. Tum saw that there were palm, fig, *songkei*, *tgan*,
- b. Triel, trah, krauvan, khoy, sraukhum,
- c. Sraulei, sraulau, krbau, ktaum,
- d. Traunom, ahaot, chongua, tmat,

475.

- a. Dongkau, troyung, ktung, krausang,
- b. Ompel, phlong, phlaeng, as well as phlubat,
- c. Litchi, durien, *mien*, *lang*, *sat*,
- d. Meakbat, bongkhau, phnau, chan, chaa,

476.

- a. Traubeik, trausake, ombieng-tgnei,
- b. Angkhong, smach, smei, roke, roka,
- c. Kroach, kraay, svat, svay, trach, treal, svaa,
- d. Saeda, sandan, tgan, chrei, chrey.

477.

- a. There were also *dak-pheay*, *whay*, *dak-pho*,
- b. *Songkho*, *pongprak*, *rang*, *smei*,
- c. Phnom-phneing, chkei-sreing, loet, lang, dei
- d. Santei, kraukop, ngop, krahlañ,

478.

- a. Chaurameas, bhos, neak, chaurakeig-thuy,
- b. Praupaeñ, khoe muy chhur, theal, traiñ,
- c. Reach chhpeh, tmaeñ-trey, wey, añchieñ,
- d. Akeiñ, angkoal, kandoal-bhat,

479.

- a. Trach, treak, chongreak, chras, khteng, ktom,
- b. Khokhei, rang, phnom, baeng, bhay-mat,
- c. Sdok-sdoe, sdei, sdow, traew, kduoch, kdat,
- d. Leang, sat, sau, tbah, kah, sral.

480.

- a. Tum walked in the forest looking around at the animals.
- b. There was only sadness and longing in his heart.
- c. Thoughts raced through his mind.
- d. He thought of Miss Teav constantly.

481.

- a. Tum glimpsed a rose out of the corner of his eye.
- b. He praised it saying, "Oh, dear flower!
- c. "Flower that grows so near to me!
- d. "Your fragrance comes to me and the smell is so fresh.

482.

- a. "Fragrance of the *komphleng* flower,
- b. "Like me beside sweet Teav!
- c. "Fragrance of the *chombei*'s rose flower,
- d. "Like me beside pure Miss Teav.

483.

- a. "Champa tree, which I've just happened to meet,
- b. "Now I am separated from dearest Teav!
- c. "*Romduel* plant, a great sorrow passes over me.
- d. "My heart misses my precious sweetheart.

484.

- a. "Oh! The fragrance of the *krauvan* flower,
- b. "Like the scent of Teav, so real and close to me!
- c. "All of these new fragrances... the scent of flowers...
- d. "Cling to the fringe of the *pahom* tied around my waist!

485.

- a. "Walking along long fields, *trieng* grass sprouts everywhere.
- b. "The setting sun moves across the sky.
- c. "In the corner of my eye, I see the overcast sky and scudding clouds,
- d. "Like my shifty flight from Teav, they come.

486.

- a. "The bumble bee that swirls around the *kraulaing* flower
- b. "Is like my body moving from place to place looking for your love.
- c. "The *phophaech* and the *phophool* birds fly into their nests,
- d. "Just as I came to seduce you.

487.

- a. "The khrauleing-khrauloeng and the khraulieng-wake birds
- b. "Desert their mates in the flock,
- c. "Like I deserted the precious and beautiful Teav,
- d. "To come over here by myself."

488.

- a. "Oh, how I pity the *tavau* bird
- b. "Calling in the deep forest in every language.
- c. "It is like the voice of the tender and beautiful Teav,
- d. "Coming in reply... I imagine."

489.

- a. "The *trauyong* bird calls in answer to her mate,
- b. "Who has sped away deserting her,
- c. "Like I deserted precious Teav.
- d. "For many days I have been unhappy. My sorrow is unrelenting.

490.

- a. "I hear a plaintive crying sound.
- b. "A wild hen is trying to answer her mate.
- c. "I think of Teav again!
- d. "Oh, Teav! It's as though you were orphaned!"

491.

- a. They walked along the jungle, bypassing the dense areas.
- b. *Thoethea* birds flew towards their nests in formation.
- c. The flock flew, turning this way and that.
- d. A parrot led his mate cautiously to their nest.

492.

- a. The *sarika* bird called looking for his mate happily.
- b. They flew far away as he led her to eat the fruit of the *srahkhum* tree.
- c. All the animals bustled in the jungle mountains,
- d. Coming and going, calling back and forth, *mai! mai!*

493.

- a. We speak now about Tum and Pech,
- b. How they sped on, traveling both night and day,
- c. Until reaching the district village of Tuk Ahlay,
- d. And how Tum met his beloved mother and conversed with her.

494.

- a. Tum explained the situation to his mother.
- b. "I have a job. The King has sent for
- c. "Me and Pech, my beloved brother.
- d. "He has decreed that we go to the Palace

495.

- a. "To be singers to entertain the Royal Court.
- b. "For this reason, mother, please prepare yourself.
- c. "Don't worry. Don't despair, Don't let it bother you.
- d. "The King knows what's best in this world.

496.

- a. Tum's mother listened to what
- b. Her son told her. "I'm pleased, my dear.
- c. "If you go, take care of yourself.
- d. "Be sure your respect for the King is made clear.

497.

- a. "Don't you be neglectful or absent-minded.
- b. "Don't look for Vietnamese women to flirt with.
- c. "Be careful not to squander your money on gambling.
- d. "Make good use of the situation there."



498.

- a. Tum bowed and saluted
- b. Goodbye to his mother. Quickly, Tum and Pech
- c. Went to the temple to pay respect
- d. To the Abbot and inform him of their journey.

499.

- a. Both of them bowed before the Abbot.
- b. Their teacher honestly and calmly
- c. Questioned them. He wanted to know their plans,
- d. And Tum responded straightforwardly.

***Part 8 (532-628): Teav's Selection To Be a Concubine & Reunion with Tum***

(Teav's selection as a King's concubine; the reunion of Tum and Teav at the King's Palace; the King's decision to marry Tum and Teav.)

532.

- a. Oh, time! At that time the King,
- b. Of great merit and royal birth, was relaxing.
- c. He thought in his intelligent mind
- d. To order a clear accounting of the potential concubines in the Kingdom.

533.

- a. "In the cities of Kampuchea throughout the land,
- b. "In every province of the Kingdom,
- c. "I want to arrange a search for any girl
- d. "Who has the attributes to be a queen.

534.

- a. "Woman who are Chinese, Vietnamese or Cham, use your discretion.
- b. "Don't say the order is from me, the King.
- c. "Even if she is a Khmer peasant or farmer,
- d. "You must act quickly without delay. Remember to fear the King!"

535.

- a. He decided at that time to end his speech.
- b. The King gave the order
- c. To have advisers called forth to transcribe the edict,
- d. Stating that arrangements be made for the selection of a queen.

536.

- a. The Commander-in-Arms arranged things as necessary
- b. And left to go to every province, one, two, three...
- c. Servants brought the King's edict into the cities
- d. Of the Cham, Chinese and Khmer local leaders.

537.

- a. Some went to Treang, a southern province,
- b. To the villages of Kampong Som, Banteay Meas,
- c. Bati and Prei Krabas until, stumbling
- d. From exhaustion, they stopped the delegation of horses and elephants.

538.

- a. Then they mounted the horses and elephants and went to Samrong Tong province,
- b. Phnom Sruoch, Thpong province and Kong Pisei.
- c. Pressing forward as fast as possible,
- d. They also looked for women who were not practiced in meditation.

539.

- a. Returning to Bati and Prei Krabas,
- b. They were happy to have completely returned.
- c. They continued the search in Saang province and Kandal Stung.
- d. Without worry, they decided to cross the river quickly

540.

- a. And go to Lovek province and Rolea Phaea,
- b. Before carefully proceeding to Khlong Krang province.
- c. Some continued to Pursat and Battambang
- d. Then crossed the Batrae River to Konpong Svay.

541.

- a. They crossed into Choeung Prei province,
- b. Kompong Seam and soon arrived in Parayana.
- c. Some jumped from place to place,
- d. Kean Svay, Lvea Em and Ta Ek harbor.

542.

- a. They went to Romduol province and entered Svay Teap,
- b. Constantly reversing direction and going to Romeas Heik.
- c. They went to search Peam Chor and came to Loeuk Dek,
- d. Then split up upon reaching Srok Muk Kompoul.

543.

- a. Some searched along the mouth of the Tonle river
- b. But were not able to find any concubines. They decided to go
- c. Before the King and truthfully tell him of the results of their search.
- d. The delegations from far and near came together to inform the King.

544.

- a. When their report ended, they took leave of the King
- b. And made for Ksach Kandal because they doubted the use of going to
- c. Baphnom, Prei Veng or Totung Tgei,
- d. Which were very poor and wouldn't have what they wanted.

545.

- a. Tracing the river they continued their search in Romeas province.
- b. Afraid of losing their way, they decided to requisition a boat and crossed the river.
- c. They rowed fast until arriving at Stung Trang.
- d. Disheartened, they decided to stop and rest.

546.

- a. Though discouraged, they forged ahead with their royal duties.
- b. They brought the King's message to Chhlong province and Kanchor.
- c. Along the way, there were *kraucheh*, lemon trees and jackfruit.
- d. Across the land, they moved forward stealthily and came to Suong Songkei.

547.

- a. When they arrived at the border of Tbaung Khmum province,
- b. Ah Chun, who was the Governor, had Chinese, Khmer
- c. And Cham-Malay women assembled on a strip of land along the rice paddies.
- d. The royal delegation paraded past the women glancing around without satisfaction.

548.

- a. Reaching a *bodhi* tree at the northern side of the town well,
- b. They saw the people scurrying around trying to see above the crowd.
- c. Each member of the royal delegation closely
- d. Observed the women but were not satisfied with any one.

549.

- a. When the setting sun refreshed the air,
- b. Teav, a girl of superior demeanor, appeared.
- c. The delegates' faces lit up and their disappointment lifted
- d. As they said to each other, "Dear friends, what complete goodness!"

550.

- a. "We searched everywhere in the Kingdom.
- b. "Nowhere has there been a woman so refreshingly beautiful!"
- c. The entire delegation was struck
- d. With a truly overwhelming and incomparable joy.

551.

- a. Leading each other, they looked slantwise at Teav's appearance saying,
- b. "There is no one anywhere endowed with such virtue.
- c. "She is well-suited to be the King's concubine.
- d. "Such is the level of her youthful and charming looks."

552.

- a. The royal delegates of each group questioned
- b. The villagers who, wanting to please, knelt down and raised their hands in salute.
- c. They said, "Teav is truly good, dear masters.
- d. "Currently, she has been given to the son of Ah Chhun."

553.

- a. The delegates snoop around and made opportunities to interrogate the townspeople.
- b. "Now, tell us. Should it be considered definite,
- c. "The marriage, or has it just been arranged?
- d. "Don't be vague or hide anything from us!"

554.

- a. The townspeople were afraid. They raised their hands to respond saying,
- b. "It is at the stage of chewing tobacco, sirs.
- c. "What we have told you is the truth."
- d. After listening to the townspeople respond, the delegates didn't doubt their honesty.

555.

- a. Then the delegates delivered the King's demand to Ah Chhun with dispatch,
- b. Making haste through the night and day.
- c. Arriving, they entered, and Ah Chhun bowed and raised his hands
- d. In respect. He quickly

556.

- a. Went to Teav's mother and told her that
- b. The command of the Great and Noble Monarch
- c. Was to have Teav escorted without delay
- d. To greet his August and Powerful Majesty.

557.

- a. Teav's mother heard the Royal Proclamation.
- b. Bowing down she raised her hands in obeisance. She then decided
- c. To tell the family members and make it understood exactly
- d. That they must present their beloved Teav before the King.

558.

- a. Ah Chhun hurried to ready the wooden boats.
- b. He presented the delegation with supplies.
- c. One boat, the good Teav boarded,
- d. Her blood relatives and friends came to send her off.

559.

- a. At that time, Teav's mother addressed the gathering
- b. And all the elders saying, "Now
- c. "Let us decorate Teav, our child, properly."
- d. Afterwards, the boats embarked swiftly.

560.

- a. The soldiers stood at the ready along the shore.
- b. Then they grabbed the oars quickly all together and embarked.
- c. Some paddled the boats around. Others pushed off.
- d. Teav said goodbye to her family as her boat was pushed away from shore.



561.

- a. Seated in the boat, Teav was unhappy. Her sorrow would not abate.
- b. Teav said, "Dearest, Noe! Look at us now!
- c. "Sister, help straighten out my thoughts.
- d. "They are taking me to go serve the King!

562.

- a. "Sister, don't you pity my troubled heart?
- b. "This heavy sadness follows me. It has no end.
- c. "Could this be your younger sister's time to die?
- d. "Oh, misery! Two sorrows fill my heart anew.

563.

- a. "One sorrow is my worry over the King
- b. "Taking me to be his concubine to join in love.
- c. "The other is my separation from Tum, my beloved.
- d. "Why go on living? I would rather die!

564.

- a. "I was born as a human in this world.
- b. "Given to the female race, I must endure misery.
- c. "My beloved sweetheart is gone away!
- d. "What heart could withstand such grief?"

565.

- a. Teav's mother rode the boat along with her.
- b. The crowd that slowly followed them from the shore didn't know the situation.
- c. They assumed that Teav went willingly to the King.
- d. With incomparable joy, they sent Teav off.

566.

- a. Teav on the other hand was sad and withdrawn.
- b. She tried but could not bear her sorrow and appear unafraid or stay
- c. Calm by following the Middle Path.
- d. Meanwhile, the boats sped forward on the current.

567.

- a. The birds floating on the surface were too many to count.
- b. The wind swirled the clouds.
- c. Taking off, the birds scattered here and there.
- d. Entering their nests, they blocked out the circle of the moon.

568.

- a. Teav said, "Oh, moon so dear.
- b. "Your color, like a crystal in the sky,
- c. "Is like my body taken from Tum. Separated,
- d. "Your light becomes cold.

569.

- a. "A multitude of stars gather around you,
- b. "Like me and Tum when we used to care for one another.
- c. "The stars follow their orbits,
- d. "Like my body accepting Tum, my beloved."

570.

- a. At four o'clock in the still of the night,
- b. The wind blew very cold.
- c. Teav missed Tum, and because of her longing,
- d. Imagined him reaching out his hands to hold her.

571.

- a. When the faint light of dawn quickened,
- b. Miss Teav discerned schools of fish
- c. Rising to the surface in the clear water:
- d. Changva, ptong, ptok, kaok, trauchea.

572.

- a. The docile *slat* fish tried its best to swim
- b. Among the *keo* fish as they crossed each other's paths.
- c. Crabs and snails in clusters followed the schools of fish.
- d. The *praulit* plants with their "duck wings" seemed to take off in the wake.

573.

- a. The boats rowed swiftly down the river.
- b. Once they had passed the province, they sped along easily.
- c. Teav thought constantly about Tum.
- d. Going with the wind, they soon reached Koh Kok Island.

574.

- a. Rowing fast, they kept a look out for Chikong Harbor,
- b. Then turned towards Russei Srok Island.
- c. Poor Teav could only think of Tum.
- d. She was unhappy and frustrated within.

575.

- a. They paddled to Potikong Traunung River,
- b. Roka Kaong then to Lvea Tae.
- c. Teav was quiet, thinking
- d. And wondering incessantly about Tum. ???

576.

- a. They reached the Dombang River, Matrei Point,
- b. The villages of Sla Torei and Moan Dap.
- c. They passed Ta Ek Port and the Prasap River,
- d. Then stopped rowing at Khsach Kandal Island.

577.

- a. Teav was unhappy and drained.
- b. She missed Tum very much and the love they knew.
- c. Those who are quickly excited are easily hurt.
- d. It comes from not thinking things through completely.

578.

- a. The King's men had no knowledge of Teav's broken heart at all.
- b. They rowed hard to pass the nearby islands.
- c. Having reached the Luong and Bankang rivers,
- d. They sped past the port of Chroy Changva.

579.

- a. Reaching the city of Phnom Penh, the land became flat.
- b. The soft afternoon sun sank in the sky.
- c. Disembarking, they saw the extensive wares along the marketplace
- d. Where large groups of Chinese and Khmer bustled to and fro.

580.

- a. Afterwards, they boarded the boats and embarked.
- b. They didn't dare stop for long out of fear of the King.
- c. They reached Chraing Châmrés and Prêk Phneou then continued,
- d. Planning to cut through Chhun Steang Harbor.

581.

- a. They rowed to Sbêk Island down river from Chen Island.
- b. Once the rice was cooked, they ate then continued on their way.
- c. They saw from their boats all the magnificent wares in the market
- d. And the proud customers who came desiring them.

582.

- a. When the boats reached Kampong Luong, they stopped so Teav could prepare.
- b. They told her to look her most beautiful.
- c. Teav bathed until she was perfectly clean.
- d. She dressed up and wore a scarf over one shoulder taking care to look just right.

583.

- a. As the sun sank low in the sky,
- b. Teav became depressed thinking about Tum.
- c. The weak sun sank and was almost blocked out by the mountains.
- d. Under a gray, cold sky, they continued to the Palace.

584.

- a. They walked along a divided road
- b. And reached the citadel of Lovek as planned.
- c. Strains of music came from the foot of the King's royal Palace.
- d. They saw the bustling market with its rows of stalls spreading in all directions.

585.

- a. The Palace was impressive with its ornamental spires.
- b. Naga railings stretched along the road leading to the Palace.
- c. Limestone cemented the sections of the citadel.
- d. An expansive moat surrounded the Palace.

586.

- a. The army barracks and courtyard were well designed.
- b. Teav saw the Palace and sobbed, upset about her separation from Tum.
- c. She heard the sounds of melodic music being played.
- d. Large brass gongs cried out in succession.

587.

- a. Out of respect for the King,
- b. The court was not inattentive. When he spoke, they noisily clambered.
- c. We will digress from the events we are describing,
- d. And make the following presentation.

588.

- a. We speak of Teav, miserable and completely unhappy.
- b. She yearned for Tum. Being
- c. Late at night, it was quiet and gone was the stifling heat.
- d. The wind blew against her body.

589.

- a. Teav lied down but could only think of Tum.
- b. She could not get to sleep. Her suffering had no relief.
- c. She cried, "Oh, Wind! You toss me here and there.
- d. "How long must I be without Tum.

590.

- a. "I'm miserable again. Tum, my dear, you
- b. "Are back home and must have forgotten me.
- c. "Now I have come here only to lay down and cry.
- d. "A spreading wound burns in my chest.

591.

- a. "This morning they will escort me to greet
- b. "The King who lives far away and rules with a nod of his head.
- c. "I am a commoner. Who,
- d. "Compassionate One, knows the sorrow besetting Tum and me?"

592.

- a. The dawn light shined brightly.
- b. Miss Teav, upset, felt a great sadness.
- c. Tears poured down. In sorrow over being separated from Tum, she cried.
- d. Her body felt weighed down as though a mountain had toppled atop of her.



593.

- a. She relaxed little by little.
- b. Her hands were barely able to untie her bundle of belongings.
- c. Seeing all the articles of clothing,
- d. She dressed up to make herself beautiful.

594.

- a. Dressed also in her sorrow, lovely Teav
- b. Soon finished adorning herself. She then very carefully
- c. Made-up her face with oil and colored powder,
- d. So it shined like the moon.

595.

- a. When she finished getting ready,
- b. They left in a group for the Palace.
- c. Arriving, they clamored around the doorway,
- d. And waited for the King at the end of the royal hall.

596.

- a. Oh, time! At that time, the august
- b. And noble King departed from the aviary.
- c. The royal concubines and young women attendants
- d. Of various rank took their places before the all-powerful Monarch.

597.

- a. The King came to a large hall.
- b. The four Palace ministers greeted their Monarch.
- c. The royal concubines, right beside the maiden Teav,
- d. Had an audience with His Majesty.

598.

- a. Oh, time! At that time, the precious Miss Teav,
- b. Radiant, charming and good without fault,
- c. Was led forward in the group
- d. To have an audience with the great and powerful King.

599.

- a. Kneeling before him, the group bowed and saluted three times.
- b. In fear of the King, they spoke while bent doubled-over.
- c. The royal guards, ministers and concubines
- d. Earnestly greeted their master.

600.

- a. The King turned on his throne to look closely.
- b. He saw that Teav had superior attributes that matched her appearance.
- c. He was impressed.
- d. Speaking to himself, he said, "This Teav makes me swoon!"

601.

- a. The King gently asked the Queen saying,
- b. "Of all the fine, young women, dear Queen,
- c. "This Teav is the best, or am I just imagining things?
- d. "My brimming heart tells me to keep her. It would be wrong to send her away."

602.

- a. The Queen said, "She is truly fine.
- b. "She is superb and radiant.
- c. "Well-suited to be a concubine of the King, clearly."
- d. The King gave instructions to have Tum called to sing for him.

603.

- a. Tum heard the King's voice and strained to hear exactly what he wanted.
- b. When it was clear, he quickly entered and prostrated himself before the Monarch.
- c. When he had finished saluting, he prepared a song.
- d. At that moment, he saw beautiful Teav and her mother who had escorted her there.

604.

- a. In his determination to have Teav, he had no thought of personal livelihood.
- b. Hot as a cooking fire, he lowered his head silently.
- c. In his torment, his chest tightened and thoughts ran amok.
- d. At his wit's end, he didn't even fear the King's power.

605.

- a. He sang, "Oh, there once was an august king of tremendous fame,
- b. "Who was the sovereign of every place in the world.
- c. "The people throughout the land
- d. "Feared the power of the noble king.

606.

- a. "One day, he ordered to arrange a search of the kingdom
- b. "To select a woman to come and be his concubine.
- c. "Now he had Teav, young and charming,
- d. "But it was not appropriate and contrary to her destiny.

607.

- a. "Though I fear Your Majesty's authority and power,
- b. "I respectfully ask permission to tell the truth regarding this Teav.
- c. "She is already engaged to me.
- d. "I promised to stay with her in every life.

608.

- a. "I made a pledge and the promise was born.
- b. "In our rebirths as a boy and girl,
- c. "I would meet my beloved Teav
- d. "And would never let myself be separated from her."

609.

- a. Teav listened to the words that Tum sang.
- b. She felt hot in her chest and tight.
- c. She didn't dare look up at Tum's face again,
- d. Afraid the King would blame them.

610.

- a. Tum sang, describing everything that had happened
- b. Since he had fallen in love with Teav.
- c. Teav, meanwhile, was pale and stricken.
- d. Shocked, she was speechless.

611.

- a. At that time, the august
- b. And noble King became angry with Miss Teav.
- c. He knew however that he should show mercy,
- d. And he pondered judgment.

612.

- a. "The Law says I should blame her.
- b. "Accordingly, I should separate her from her fiancé.
- c. "By doing this, the Buddha would erase any wrong-doing.
- d. "Thus, I should expel her from the Palace until goodness is restored."

613.

- a. The King told the Palace officials
- b. To have Miss Teav brought before him so he could question her.
- c. "If the reply she gives agrees with Tum's words,
- d. "We will release her in accordance with her response."

614.

- a. The King wanted first
- b. To question Tum. "Tum!
- c. "Is Teav really your fiancé? Answer!
- d. "Don't hide anything. Speak the truth!"

615.

- a. At that time, Tum was terrified of the King.
- b. He listened closely and quickly raised his joined hands respectfully.
- c. Tum addressed the King truthfully.
- d. "Please have mercy on me Your Majesty.

616.

- a. "Have me killed for my serious crime.
- b. "Condemn me to live as a slave of Your Highness.
- c. "I respectfully say as a slave and without deception
- d. "That Miss Teav is in fact my fiancé."

617.

- a. The King then questioned Miss Teav.
- b. "Teav! I have given your situation close attention.
- c. "Speak truthfully. Don't be afraid.
- d. "Have you and Tum laid together, or is this untrue?"

618.

- a. Teav addressed the august King.
- b. "Your Majesty, please have mercy on me.
- c. "Tum and I are exactly
- d. "As Your Majesty has already been informed."

619.

- a. At that time, the august King
- b. Had listened to all that had been said.
- c. He completely believed Teav's words.
- d. The King issued orders to his officers.

620.

- a. He ordered the ministers,
- b. Royal advisors and slaves
- c. To make ready the wedding materials
- d. As He would marry Teav with Sir Tum.

621.

- a. The Council of Ministers took leave of the King.
- b. They went house to house in separate groups
- c. To inform one and all that the next day
- d. They must not delay and hurry to the Palace for the wedding ceremony.

622.

- a. Then the King arose and retired to the royal bedroom.
- b. Entering his sleeping chamber,
- c. The King lied down upon his high and comfortable bed.
- d. As for Tum, he thought about what had taken place that day before the King.

623.

- a. When the early morning light shined coolly,
- b. The noble King awoke from sleep.
- c. He left his bedroom and entered the hall to meet his concubines.
- d. All of the ministers went to have an audience with the King.

624.

- a. The King ordered that everything be made ready,
- b. And that Teav along with Tum be escorted immediately to greet him.
- c. Tum and Teav presented themselves before the King and bowed saluting.
- d. The great King wished them happiness and prosperity.



625.

- a. The important officials gathered together.
- b. The Council of Ministers joined in to assist with all the preparations
- c. For the wedding of Tum and precious Teav,
- d. As the all-powerful Monarch looked on with compassion.

626.

- a. Having greeted the King that morning already
- b. With an abundance of empty wishes regarding the wedding,
- c. Teav's mother left the King
- d. And led her family to return home.

627.

- a. As for the charming and beautiful Teav,
- b. She was joined in marriage with Tum.
- c. Teav was happy and without worry,
- d. Truly fulfilled as though her heart had realized its goal.

628.

- a. Tum, for some time now, was happy and at ease.
- b. He joined the King's court and relaxed with dignity.
- c. In his place of comfort,
- d. He didn't have anything to worry about.

**Part 9 (629-751): Teav's Mother's Trick And the Separation of Tum & Teav**

(Teav's mother's plan to marry Murn Guon and Teav; her letter to Teav; Teav's separation from Tum; Teav trapped; Teav's letter to Tum; Tum's vow to win Teav back; the King's letter; Tum's and Pech's journey to Tbong Kmom; Teav's worry that Tum will not arrive in time.)

629.

- a. To speak of Teav's mother who had returned home,
- b. Worries beset her without relief.
- c. "Oh, Teav! My precious child!" she cried,
- d. "How did you ever come to have such a pitiful husband?

630.

- a. "It's all because of that scoundrel thief!
- b. "He is vile beyond limit! He dares to trick us!
- c. "He said Teav is truly his fiancé,
- d. "So the King would not blame him!

631.

- a. "I will separate Teav from this scoundrel.
- b. "Have no doubt! I am determined
- c. "To outmaneuver him by my wits,
- d. "And be rid of that no-good womanizer Tum.

632.

- a. "I had already decided to marry Teav to Murn Guon,
- b. "The son of Mister Ah Chhun. It was definite!
- c. "I will make that rascal Tum ask himself why he ever left his family
- d. "To come here on that day!"

633.

- a. "I had already decided to give her to Mister Ah Chhun!
- b. "Murn Guon, his son, had even offered his hand!
- c. "He has wealth and high rank!"
- d. In anger, Teav's mother plotted her revenge for many days.

634.

- a. As twilight fell, Teav's mother
- b. Furiously dashed off a letter.
- c. She was willing to lose everything she had known and bring on death
- d. Just to follow thoughtless flights of fancy.

635.

- a. Then Teav's mother started off.
- b. She arrived at the Governor's residence.
- c. They had become like relatives to each other, because of their mutual trust.
- d. Being a true friend like that, she would tell him her plan.

636.

- a. She entered and sat down composing herself.
- b. Raising her hands in greeting, she said, "I
- c. "Am only a woman. Because we had already made arrangements
- d. "I'm afraid of doing wrong by taking back my marriage agreement with you.

637.

- a. "I'm so angry, Governor, with that rascal Tum.
- b. "He has brought disgrace to my reputation.
- c. "He is arrogant and has no respect for anyone.
- d. "Now, I must ask you

638.

- a. "To find a way to prepare the desserts and food,
- b. "The pork, chicken, duck, fish and rice wine,
- c. "As well as vegetables of all kinds from all over.
- d. "I have prepared a letter and arranged for its delivery

639.

- a. "To Teav my child to have her come back home quickly.
- b. "The letter says that her mother who lives
- c. "Far away is seriously ill and feverish.
- d. "It instructs her to come, as her mother's flesh and blood.

640.

- a. "Return quickly before it's too late,' I repeated.
- b. "I'm anxiously waiting, fearful
- c. "My strength is very little... not enough to sustain me...
- d. "If I don't see you, there will be a tragedy.'

641.

- a. "When Teav arrives,
- b. "Interrupt whatever you may be doing to set our trap.
- c. "She will be given to Guon to be his wife
- d. "As we previously arranged together already."

642.

- a. Teav's mother returned to her house.
- b. She thought a while then hurried
- c. To find someone to copy the letter quickly
- d. And prepare every item for the journey. She told the servants to go

643.

- a. And make ready the messenger.
- b. She instructed him to tell Teav not to delay
- c. Or take a long time traveling, because now
- d. Her mother is sick with a fever and unable to eat.

644.

- a. The messenger, along with a number of others,
- b. Simultaneously clamored
- c. Into the boat and paddled quickly down the river,
- d. As though they wanted to reach the world beyond.

645.

- a. They docked the boat and went instantly
- b. To Tum's house. Tum immediately asked them to explain their purpose.
- c. Teav said, "How is my mother?"
- d. "Is she well or has something happened?"

646.

- a. Everyone from the other side listened.
- b. When Teav finished asking about her mother, they explained the situation.
- c. They produced the letter and gave it to Miss Teav.
- d. Reading the letter, Teav was frozen with fear.

647.

- a. Teav said, "Oh, my dearest,
- b. "My mother is seriously ill, close to death!
- c. "She says she is not eating, famished and emaciated.
- d. "Now, she urges that

648.

- a. "I leave you and go immediately.
- b. "I must hurry back in order to follow the custom
- c. "Of gathering one's children and relatives
- d. "To make offerings to the family spirits in the house."

649.

- a. Tum sighed deeply then responded.
- b. "Oh, sweetheart. Go quickly.
- c. "Afterwards, if your mother is well, hurry back.
- d. "Don't stay away any longer than necessary!

650.

- a. "I will arrange for the journey to be made pleasant.
- b. "I am unable to go and must remain here.
- c. "My responsibilities to the King must be fulfilled.
- d. "My dear, take care of yourself!"

651.

- a. Teav said goodbye to Tum and boarded the boat.
- b. They rowed quickly and cleared the headland.
- c. Rowing hard, they did not stop anywhere.
- d. Teav felt sad, and her face was pale.

652.

- a. On one hand, she was sad about leaving her one and only husband.
- b. On the other hand, she was sad about her mother being seriously ill.
- c. Teav said, "Oh, I dread being apart from Tum.
- d. "And I worry about losing my mother. I am sad in many ways."

653.

- a. They stopped rowing at the port and immediately reached a group of islands.
- b. They sped forward between the gaps in the islands. There was no straight course.
- c. They didn't stop to rest until
- d. Docking and disembarking at Tbong Kmom.

654.

- a. Teav climbed up the steps to her house and presented herself.
- b. She saw her mother and aunts and uncles gathered together.
- c. Relatives were busily conferring with one another,
- d. Preparing foods, breads and mixing rice wine.

655.

- a. Hands grabbed cooked rice, cakes and wine
- b. To offer the ancestors. They sprinkled water and saluted with hands clasped.
- c. "All ancestral spirits of the mother,
- d. "Please come to this side to eat.



656.

- a. "When you finish eating, please give your blessing to your grandchildren
- b. "And numerous descendants. Don't leave anyone out."
- c. At this point, Teav had just arrived.
- d. "Now child, restrain yourself and think ahead.

657.

- a. "Teav come here, dear child, and listen
- b. "As your mother explains everything from beginning to end.
- c. "Normally, when a child is born with an attractive appearance
- d. "And a charming voice,

658.

- a. "His renown will make its way to the King.
- b. "The King will then bring the child before him, and showing pity,
- c. "Make him an official because he doesn't have anything
- d. "And is very poor and doesn't have food to eat.

659.

- a. "For this reason, your mother looks at things differently.
- b. "Ah Chhun thinks you should be pitied.
- c. "He has rank and wealth.
- d. "He wants to save you from a life of poverty and is committed to your marriage"

660.

- a. "With Murn Guon, his son, who has
- b. "The status and wealth we have hoped for.
- c. "For our row boat to reach the shore, we must only work the oar.
- d. "You'll have everything your heart desires!

661.

- a. "You'll have elephants, horse carts, Khmer buffaloes,
- b. "And a palanquin with a shaded bed.
- c. "You'll have soothing music both day and night."
- d. Teav had had enough and was completely exasperated with her mother.

662.

- a. Hearing her mother go on, Teav nearly fainted.
- b. She was ready to die from anger.
- c. She said, "Oh, mother! You have extensive virtue.
- d. "How did you become so removed from the meaning of the Buddha's law?"

663.

- a. "If you want me to have a husband,
- b. "Tum is the one I love.
- c. "To this I would agree to gladly.
- d. "We are devoted to each other forever.

664.

- a. "If you don't have pity on me,
- b. "And force me to marry Murn Guon,
- c. "You may as well take my life, because the marriage is not right.
- d. "I beg you to accept my refusal."

665.

- a. Teav's mother glared at her.
- b. She had become upset because of her child's defiance.
- c. She cursed Teav saying, "Scoundrel! You are stubborn as steel.
- d. "I would like to grab your mouth and tear it apart now.

666.

- a. "I tell you that I will let you have prosperity,
- b. "And you dare to be so impudent as to say it's not right!
- c. "You say you love that rascal Tum who doesn't even have parents!
- d. "You don't think about the gossip that would bring! You have no shame!"

667.

- a. "He doesn't know people who have wealth!
- b. "And you want to marry that orphan!
- c. "From where will he acquire a reputation?
- d. "For a long time coming you would surely be poor!

668.

- a. Teav heard her mother's intense anger.
- b. Trying to get a word in edgewise, she pleaded her case.
- c. Her mother, in silence, bolted straight
- d. Over to the house of Ah Chhun.

669.

- a. Governor Ah Chhun, who had great merit,
- b. Saw her, and with extreme pleasure
- c. Said, "Madam, welcome! Come and make yourself comfortable!
- d. "What is upsetting you? Does it concern me?"

670.

- a. The would-be in-law answered,
- b. "Governor, prepare the wedding quickly and quietly.
- c. "Inform the women to make the cakes.
- d. "Call the guests to gather at once."

671.

- a. We stop to digress before presenting the wedding.
- b. We will describe Teav who has become horribly sad.
- c. She has no desire to eat,
- d. And a heavy sorrow burdens her thoughts.

672.

- a. Teav lied down wide-eyed from pain and sorrow.
- b. "Oh! Life is over!
- c. "My death will be because I went far from Tum, my eternal love.
- d. "I don't know if he will angry with me.

673.

- a. "I left him, and they really tricked me!
- b. "Oh, Tum! Now, they've locked me up.
- c. "They will prevent me from seeing you until I waste away to nothing.
- d. "I have pledged myself to you. My mind is made up."

674.

- a. Teav, in her sorrow, composed a letter to Tum.
- b. After it was written, Miss Teav carefully
- c. Folded the letter shut and wrapped it tight with betel, areca seeds
- d. And tobacco leaves. She then dispatched a servant,

675.

- a. A person in whom Teav placed her complete trust.
- b. Sympathetic and a praiseworthy relative, he was
- c. A skilled messenger who knew the roadways well.
- d. He sped away as on wings meant for speed.

676.

- a. The messenger, clear about what Teav had ordered him to do,
- b. Didn't delay at all in delivering the letter
- c. And fresh betel, areca seeds
- d. And tobacco that Teav had wrapped-up together.

677.

- a. He started off,
- b. And reached the roadway in an instant.
- c. He caught his breath, then quickly
- d. Accelerated to get to the river.

678.

- a. He spoke to the men and women at the river
- b. To transport him down the river for free. They felt
- c. Sympathy for such a distraught person.
- d. They boarded the boat and shoveled the water paddling furiously.

679.

- a. When they reached the provincial shore,
- b. He called to everyone. "Oh, people!"
- c. The entourage of Tum and Teav, wanting to be of service
- d. To their beloved couple, approached the messenger.

680.

- a. Together, they went for help to the King,
- b. Whom they respected, being good people.
- c. Tum's and Teav's enemies scattered far not daring to be close by,
- d. For fear that they would be beaten to a pulp and killed.

681.

- a. The boatmen returned home
- b. And recounted everything that had happened.
- c. Teav's servant arrived at the Palace. Without
- d. Worry of arriving unannounced, he proceeded to

682.

- a. Tum's house where he was already known and trusted.
- b. Tum immediately asked a million questions.
- c. "Did you come for pleasure or is something wrong?"
- d. "Whatever may be troubling you, please tell me."

683.

- a. The messenger took out Teav's letter.
- b. Tum looked at it stunned. He reached out his hand and grabbed it.
- c. Opening the package, Tum saw the container of betel
- d. And tobacco that his wife had sent.

684.

- a. "Oh, Teav! My sweetheart. What misery!
- b. "I'm shocked again!
- c. "My spirit is stifled! Shall I prepare
- d. "To travel as I believe I should or do something else?

685.

- a. "Oh, Teav! You went back because you believed your mother was sick.
- b. "You didn't know it would turn into a trick to wedge us apart.
- c. "Oh, Teav! My sadness is overwhelming!
- d. "I'm devastated as though a mountain had fallen upon me.

686.

- a. "Oh, Teav! You pitied me
- b. "Truly in that moment when you dared to write
- c. "This letter
- d. "Informing me of what has happened.

687.

- a. "Oh, Teav! My sadness about that ordeal weighs heavy on me.
- b. "It overwhelms and paralyzes me.
- c. "I fall silent as though an evil force
- d. "Confuses and empties my mind."



688.

- a. "Oh, Teav! If they keep you against your will,
- b. "While I remain free, I will not be stopped easily.
- c. "I will struggle to the death like a soldier
- d. "Who dies within his citadel under siege.

689.

- a. "Normally, a royal army general
- b. "Doesn't panic or retreat.
- c. "He shoots! He stabs! He kicks and tramples!
- d. "This is like the struggle of our interlocked lives.

690.

- a. "Although they will try to make me give up, I will never stop fighting.
- b. "Oh! Teav, my dear! If we die,
- c. "Our deaths will bring another life. This is
- d. "A battle like the Buddha's against Mara during that time."

691.

- a. Tum, sad faced, could only worry about Teav.
- b. Teav's suffering broke Tum apart. He fell silent.
- c. In their separation, Tum felt her absence and lost his spirit.
- d. He lied down rigid and motionless on the floor.

692.

- a. "The bed where we used to sleep is still here.
- b. "Teav, my dear, when it would be time to eat,
- c. "We would eat our food here. You left from here.
- d. "Lost! Gone so far away!

693.

- a. "I wish her mother great misfortune!
- b. "She took Teav away. Split us apart!
- c. "She plotted to kill our love and destroy us!
- d. "Teav! Here, everything seemed right! I can't understand how this could happen!"

694.

- a. Tum observed the things around him: the container of areca,
- b. The sarongs and scarves, the cushions and pillows,
- c. And wool mats in front of him. He was drained and weak.
- d. After looking at these things, he crept to his room and slouched over asleep.

695.

- a. Then Tum bolted up and grabbed a pillow with his outstretched hand
- b. And hugged it in his arms. He was frustrated
- c. And nauseous, upset and confused.
- d. Restless, he got up and shuffled away.

696.

- a. He descended the steps to the ground and observed the night sky,
- b. Clear and wide. His throat was dry.
- c. The quiet grew as the night deepened steadily,
- d. And Tum recounted the sequence of events since that morning.

697.

- a. "Oh, wind! Deliver
- b. "The clouds in groups to Teav. She may think
- c. "Because she is separated from me, I have stopped thinking of her.
- d. "Oh, Teav! I have been drinking water instead of eating rice since you left!

698.

- a. "My misery is like having the wind knocked out of me.
- b. "My distress compares to a child and mother
- c. "Who were separated and died without seeing one another.
- d. "I am far away from you. We are separated from each other.

699.

- a. "You are gone from everything: our sleeping chamber,
- b. "Our eating implements, writing tools, and our oil and wax.
- c. "I'm devastated and can't imagine not seeing you again,
- d. "Or that you could ever live with Guon as your husband.

700.

- a. "If Teav has really been given to Guon,
- b. "I will struggle to the death because she is my wife!
- c. "They keep trying to take her from me again and again!
- d. "They have no idea of compassion or the slightest fear!"

701.

- a. Sir Tum fretted over his separation from Miss Teav.
- b. At dawn, he quickly filled his arms,
- c. Grabbing this and grabbing that of his belongings.
- d. Once the things were packed, he planned to go.

702.

- a. He made his way to the King's Palace.
- b. Entering straight away, Tum had no fear of anyone.
- c. Arriving at the King's chambers, he presented himself before the King
- d. Of great power and virtue.

703.

- a. Tum raised his hands and bowed,
- b. Readied himself and comported his head.
- c. Tum said, "I beg to inform you, my wife
- d. "Has gone. She has a completely new husband!

704.

- a. "Your Highness,
- b. "There have been evil doings of all kinds and great misery.
- c. "I ask of you, my Lord,
- d. "To send word of your command

705.

- a. "To Governor Ah Chhun from the province of Tbong Kmom.
- b. "He is in complete control.
- c. "A letter arrived saying Teav's mother was sick and feverish.
- d. "It instructed her child to return home.

706.

- a. "Teav went and they had arranged her marriage to Murn Guon.
- b. "Miss Teav, terrified, didn't dare object.
- c. "She arranged to deliver a message to me to see if I could
- d. "Request Your Majesty's help straightaway before it's too late."

707.

- a. The King listened to every word.
- b. He issued his decree forthwith.
- c. "That rascal thief Ah Chhun will break like a chicken egg!
- d. "He is deluded to presume himself deserving of my support!

708.

- a. "He doesn't know wrong from right, rice from weeds!
- b. "That thief is like a dog eating beef!
- c. "He dares to challenge me! That is a crime for which he must be boiled alive!
- d. "I will haul him in then boil him alive in an iron skillet.

709.

- a. "That thief will hide in the forest watching out for my attack.
- b. "He is used to being on the run like the *kvaek* bird.
- c. "That monkey doesn't know my big stick will crack his skull!
- d. "The rascal's head, tomorrow... tomorrow... will roll!"

710.

- a. Oh, time! At that time, King Ream Reach,
- b. The all-powerful, was clearly furious.
- c. He called out,
- d. "Come! All Court Magistrates!

711.

- a. The officials and high-ranking ministers,
- b. Hearing the King's command, entered the hall and gathered to receive his instructions.
- c. In the presence of the King, they bowed their heads,
- d. Kneeled and brought their clasped hands above their heads.

712.

- a. The King looked directly at the group
- b. Of low and high ranking officials and ministers.
- c. "Chief Ministers and advisors,
- d. "Prepare a Royal Edict at once.

713.

- a. "I pity Sir Tum who has been separated from his wife.
- b. "They were told Teav's mother was seriously ill. A messenger came to tell her this.
- c. "Teav went there and was entrapped.
- d. "Ah Chhun has grabbed her in order to marry her

714.

- a. "To Murn Guon, the scoundrel's own son.
- b. "The rascal dares to do this, thinking he has no need to fear anyone!
- c. "But I have married Sir Tum and Teav, because he said
- d. "Teav was already his fiancé.

715.

- a. "As for Tum, once you have my letter, go there
- b. "Quickly to put things right according to my orders.
- c. "If the scoundrels don't listen, you must turn back right away.
- d. "I won't have you confronting them."

716.

- a. The officials heard the King's command.
- b. They raised their hands in salute all together,
- c. Then retreated from the hall and arrived outside the Royal Palace.
- d. Immediately, they stopped a group of royal scribes.

717.

- a. Conferring together, someone was sent to get a piece of paper
- b. And a special quill made of silver.
- c. When they finished writing the letter, they preceded to an office
- d. And ordered someone to stamp the letter with a large handsome seal.

718.

- a. Stamped and folded tight,
- b. And having already received approval, they wrapped the letter
- c. In a special cloth.
- d. Then Tum conferred with Pech.

719.

- a. "Oh, Pech! I'm very worried about all of this!
- b. "My wife... they took to be married to another!
- c. "Now, Pech! Make haste!
- d. "Arrange for a wooden paddle boat,



720.

- a. "As well as all kinds of provisions, cases of areca nut,
- b. "Scarves, silk sarongs, bottles of tea and drinking glasses.
- c. "Ready the paddle boat,
- d. "And call a team of paddlers. We must leave right away!"

721.

- a. Tum had already boarded the boat.
- b. They rowed away and the boats swiftly headed up the river.
- c. The wind blew against Tum, who sat blank-faced
- d. In the boat, hot and upset.

722.

- a. Unable to endure it, Tum lied down.
- b. He observed the stars near the moon as though in escort. Tum said,
- c. "Oh, Heavenly Moon encircled by stars!
- d. "Release me from this suffering."

723.

- a. "Holy Moon, aglow and resplendent,
- b. "Like the color of Miss Teav's skin. One cannot see the future!"
- c. Tum narrated his thoughts one by one while singing a melody.
- d. "Look at the land. Look at the girls. Look at the fish and reeds.

724.

- a. "Oh trees in close rows, why should I
- b. "Be separated from Teav my sweetheart and constantly worried?
- c. "I'm not like the *tras* plant or *kraukoa* and *tbaing* trees.
- d. "Rather, I'm like strychnine that sprouts near fig trees and surely kills them."

725.

- a. Tum counted the trees as he went along.
- b. Gazing into the deep waters he saw schools of fish.
- c. The fresh-water *chongwa* and the *phtong* leapt up suddenly.
- d. "You must be breaking out of the water

726.

- a. "To go look for your husbands.
- b. "There are similar schools of fish in ponds
- c. "Which won't leave their mates or run away.
- d. "Everyone in their school is content and happy."

727.

- a. Looking at the land, Tum tried to distract himself by making rhymes.
- b. Along the eastern shore were scattered
- c. Villages and fields of sugar cane along side mango groves.
- d. Tum, distraught, cried into a water pot.

728.

- a. Come the dead of the night,
- b. The wind blew very cold.
- c. Tum pulled out a cloth and covered his head to block the wind.
- d. Startled, he sprang up thinking incessantly.

729.

- a. His vertigo would not lessen.
- b. Distraught, he wanted only to lie down spread out.
- c. He screamed into the dark. "Teav, my dear! Your spirit
- d. "Leaves your body, and silently goes to me.

730.

- a. "I have reached this distant land.
- b. "Oh, Teav! Are you his or still mine?
- c. "I would do anything to know right now.
- d. "If I had wings, I would fly to get there at once!"

731.

- a. The oars cut through the water as though in accordance with Tum's wish to fly.
- b. Tum concentrated trying to hear
- c. The sound of the wind and waves. The boat nearly turned over.
- d. Tum recited verses to his sweetheart. "Oh, Karma!

732.

- a. "One is born doomed. Death becomes
- b. "Life. Misery is inevitable.
- c. "As with the taking away of lovely Miss Teav,
- d. "Our separation brings sorrow."

733.

- a. Tum described the villages along the river.
- b. His words flowed, carefully arranged. "Oh, fig trees!
- c. "Inclined and hanging, harmoniously bent in search of each other.
- d. "Trees know the right connections so not to be separated.

734.

- a. "Knowing so much they can entwine themselves
- b. "Like blood relatives or village neighbors.
- c. "The *roka* tree finds ways to stay together.
- d. "Trees and Nature know better than anyone!

735.

- a. "Not like Ah Chhun who is human.
- b. "Because he has had a high rank for a long time,
- c. "He doesn't think he could be brought down.
- d. "His desire for permanence, will not endure.

736.

- a. Tum finished reciting and turned his attention to rowing.
- b. He looked at the water still and deep,
- c. Then looked at the northern bank of Tranung Sdau,
- d. And veered towards Pitea Kandal.

737.

- a. From the back side of the marsh's end, Tum strove hard
- b. And came up along side Rusei Srok. Overjoyed to see him,
- c. Old and young acted comically together.
- d. Happily, they greeted him and politely

738.

- a. Said, "You there! Paddling the boat in such a hurry!
- b. "Dear man of graceful form! Try to row up here!
- c. "It seems as though you are racing the wind!
- d. "Whatever it is that you covet so badly, tell us too!"

739.

- a. The people who questioned him were polite, but Tum did not reply
- b. Because he was pushing himself too frantically.
- c. For one thing, he was trying to row fast enough to cross the marsh
- d. And get to Port Chikong as he intended.

740.

- a. Tum rowed past Kok Island and Sotin.
- b. "Rice was cooked, and he stopped the boat. Tum was pensive.
- c. Having set up a pole to which to tie the boat, he went ashore and stopped quietly.
- d. He watched the sun going down.

741.

- a. Gone was the light of the sun.
- b. Tum was exhausted. It was the middle of the night.
- c. He finished eating and was frustrated still
- d. And became cold. The tide was falling.

742.

- a. Tum exclaimed, "Oh, wind which blows!
- b. "Oh, Teav! Taken away! The scent of your perfume!
- c. "I can hold only the wafts of fragrance!
- d. "Teav! The greedy thieves took you from me!

743.

- a. "They left you and me all alone!
- b. "Teav does not miss me! Beware of the heart of a woman!
- c. "A charming heart without consideration or pity!
- d. "Having Guon to be her husband, she drops Tum.

744.

- a. "Oh! Teav! My sorrow is extraordinary!
- b. "I will get to Tbong Kmom tomorrow.
- c. "It is certain Ah Chhun will seek revenge
- d. "And call the guests to gang up and kill me."

745.

- a. Let's digress a moment from Tum's situation,
- b. And take up a portrayal of fallen Teav.
- c. Being distraught and confused in turns,
- d. Teav prayed only for her dear man to come to her.

746.

- a. "Love of my life! My sweetheart!
- b. "Now, they plan openly
- c. "To tear us apart. From the day
- d. "We were separated, live or die, I will always be your wife!

747.

- a. "My dear! Are you on your way or not? I continue
- b. "To watch the road for your arrival, but it is quiet and empty.
- c. "I think of Mother giving me away
- d. "Without considering my feelings at all.

748.

- a. "She boasts that she's giving me to someone who has status,
- b. "Fine possessions, gold, silver and wealth.
- c. "Oh, Tum! She says that you are poor and without possessions.
- d. "It seems like you don't dare to steal me back.

749.

- a. "As soon as you were gone from me, I fell completely silent.
- b. "My misery is as big as a mountain. I cry myself sick. When I get up
- c. "To go somewhere. Before I arrive, I become so confused, I must take shelter.
- d. "I still think about you all the time!

750.

- a. "What can I do to know if your arrival will be long or soon.
- b. "There isn't anyone at all to go and tell you to hurry.
- c. "When will we meet and see each other face to face?
- d. "My misery is so distressing.

751.

- a. "At this very moment, they are planning to come and quickly
- b. "Prepare the materials and select the wedding food.
- c. "People are already gathering. They have even
- d. "Rented a large area which has been sealed off and set aside for the ceremony."



***Part 10 (752-884): The Wedding And Death of Tum and Teav***

(The rush to prepare for the wedding before Tum's arrival; the engagement ceremony; the wedding; Tum's and Pech's arrival; Tum's intoxication and reunion with Teav; Tum's execution by Ah Chun's strongmen; Teav's and Noe's suicides; the burying of the bodies.)

752.

- a. We digress here from presenting
- b. Teav in her grief all alone and without comfort,
- c. And continue by describing
- d. Teav's worried mother.

753.

- a. She was worried because everything was taking a long time.
- b. Anxious and unable to relax,
- c. She decided to leave the house and walked straight to see Ah Chun.
- d. Arriving, she went up to the estate.

754.

- a. At Ah Chun's house, she met his wife and son.
- b. Teav's mother, indefatigable, addressed them,
- c. Raising her joined hands appropriately.
- d. "If you please, I have come here because

755.

- a. "Teav doesn't think of future shame,
- b. "Or whether she appears idiotic.
- c. "I want to inform the Governor without leaving anything out."
- d. Ah Chun's wife and son were taken by surprise at that time.

756.

- a. "Before the day of the wedding...
- b. "Already Tum clearly understands our plan... It seems to me that
- c. "He is already on his way. I'm worried. Get ready,
- d. "Governor. Hurry while there is still hope.

757.

- a. "Find out which month and day
- b. "The meeting of the parents should be held as is proper.
- c. "The wedding must be carefully planned,
- d. "Because delays cannot be allowed.

758.

- a. "Whatever sorrow Tum may be feeling, he will set off
- b. "In anger, because Teav is his wife.
- c. "I bid you goodbye as I should return at once.
- d. "Think of how to prepare the wedding as soon as possible for fear of losing later on."

759.

- a. At that time, Ah Chun
- b. Bowed happily. Trying to relax,
- c. He admonished his wife and son not to let
- d. Themselves be careless or imprudent.

760.

- a. He told the Lieutenant-Governor to order the district chief
- b. To find wild boar, heron, beef, chicken, duck,
- c. Carts, earthenware vases, garlic, pepper, sweet potatoes,
- d. Cooking stock of arrowroot, *ptei* and French mint,

761.

- a. Imported cooking stock, and cooking stock for every kind of vegetable.
- b. He assigned knowledgeable people to buy strong wine,
- c. Sausage made of dried meats, grilled mutton,
- d. Ray fish, bamboo shoots, watercress, snails,

762.

- a. Every kind of chili pepper, lemon grass, ginger, horseradish,
- b. Selected lotus seeds and shoots,
- c. Cabbage heads, greens, large red ants,
- d. *Bongkong* birds, and beef shins in jack fruit, papaya,

763.

- a. And sliced vegetables. He ordered to have these items found
- b. Then brought back, spread in baskets and dried to keep.
- c. When they were nicely dried, they should be gathered up and stuffed into sacks.
- d. He ordered them not to delay and that they should act quickly.

764.

- a. Some were told to deliver wood, bamboo and rattan,
- b. Knives, jars, covered pots, chisels and pliers
- c. And take them to make a storage shed to be ready quickly.
- d. He ordered that neighbors and relatives living far away

765.

- a. In numerous provinces be informed of the wedding as well.
- b. Because Ah Chun explained
- c. That they must prepare for the marriage between Guon and lovely Teav,
- d. Everyone acted quickly to complete the tasks on time.

766.

- a. He gave orders to find a wiseman to treat Guon and Teav's teeth with castor oil,
- b. And an astrologer to determine a wedding day that would be propitious
- c. And glorious, and to gather cushions and have them put away for safe keeping.
- d. After meeting together for a long time,

767.

- a. Everyone set off in a loud commotion, anxious and helter-skelter,
- b. To buy or confiscate all the materials needed for the wedding.
- c. When they had finished, they quickly put everything in place,
- d. As Ah Chun had instructed them.

768.

- a. Running up to his residence, the Lieutenant-Governor informed him,  
"Sir, don't
- b. "Blame us. High standards were met without negligence.
- c. "I have ordered my men, each group through its leader
- d. "And according to his task, to plan together and transport

769.

- a. "The food stuffs and take them to the cooking shed,
- b. "To use whatever materials to decorate the hall,
- c. "To wrap the areca in handkerchiefs,
- d. "And to organize the dancers and musicians."

770.

- a. They brought forth all the materials for every aspect of the ceremony,
- b. And distributed them carefully
- c. In a hall adequately big, strong and spacious.
- d. Twenty-five homes were decorated with torches.

771.

- a. They lit all the torches and lanterns.
- b. The parents, relatives and beloved friends
- c. Entered and gathered together.
- d. During that time, there was surly no worry of lack.

772.

- a. As soon as the guests had gathered together, they entered a new hall
- b. Where the boys and girls, young and old enjoyed themselves.
- c. They ate cakes. They ate rice. They ate soup.
- d. They ate *kau*. They ate *kau*-shaped rolls, and drank wine.

773.

- a. The elders conversed with one another.
- b. "We must discuss which day and time to hold the wedding."
- c. They stood up and approached the wiseman.
- d. When he finished eating, he instructed them.

774.

- a. The great wiseman was a deep thinker.
- b. Examining the situation, he said, "We will consider
- c. "The wedding date tomorrow." After preparing the astrological table,
- d. Wisemen arrived to determine the exact point in time for the ceremony.

775.

- a. With the preparations complete, they deliberated together.
- b. The wisemen debated the issue shrewdly.
- c. The parents of the boy were not to delay at all.
- d. They had to gather the wedding pillows for whatever day the scholars determined.

776.

- a. The wiseman representing the groom's side,
- b. At that time, he spoke,
- c. "Have all the decorations prepared
- d. "To transform the hall according to custom. Don't delay."

777.

- a. "The wedding site should have
- b. "*Beisei*, sacred areca, five mouthfuls of areca,
- c. "Attendants wearing sompot cloth, sitting on the left and right, waiting to bow.
- d. "Be careful of making mistakes which people will remember."

778.

- a. At this point, the wiseman said it was time
- b. To go up to the Governor's residence as required by custom.
- c. The wiseman soaked an afterbirth with castor-oil,
- d. And ordered someone to look for a clay pot in which to put this medicine.

779.

- a. He said that it was necessary to have a woven basket.
- b. As for the materials for doing the teeth, he had someone get
- c. White and red sandalwood and white bark
- d. That were mixed together with the pith of various kinds of wood.

780.

- a. They pounded and packaged rice,
- b. Then stuffed it into bamboo containers. They made soup and corked it.
- c. From inside the clay pot, they dug out the afterbirth,
- d. Turned it face up and placed it on the stove.

781.

- a. With the building materials, they made a fence around the wedding area.
- b. Umbrellas and flags were set up in sufficient numbers.
- c. *Beisei* and food offerings were put on tables in plates.
- d. When everything was arranged, they stopped a while.

782.

- a. At this moment, we must turn from
- b. Speaking of the matter of the wedding and continue with
- c. The description of Tum who is burying his frustration
- d. In his aching chest. He calls Pech,



783.

- a. "Oh, Pech! I have been trying to listen.
- b. "I hear something like the sound of drums. They have married
- c. "Teav and Guon already! Where can we stop?
- d. "Prepare to dock the boats! Throw the anchor!"

784.

- a. Tum and Pech disembarked and followed the sound of the drums.
- b. There arose in Tum a paralyzing sorrow that didn't abate at all.
- c. Tears trickled down his face. He kept longing for Teav.
- d. He said, "Oh, I'm getting numb!"

785.

- a. With no idea what to do, Tum's will was waning, almost broken.
- b. "Oh, me! Tomorrow looks to be my end!
- c. "I will lose my life and lovely Teav!
- d. "Teav will have no regret I came so close!"

786.

- a. "This sorrow doesn't relent! I've reached the end of my rope!"
- b. Tum said, "My dear!" and took out the package Teav had given him.
- c. "Enough already, Pech! What shall we do?
- d. "We must take risks according to the task and my Karma."

787.

- a. Tum opened the package and took out the *sampot*.
- b. He got dressed in fear. Finally, he screamed and cried.
- c. He pounded his chest and was bruised everywhere from the blows.
- d. He was pale. His separation from Teav made him suffer from regret.

788.

- a. Pech told him, "Tum! Don't carry on like this!"
- b. "Come on, brother! Try to get up and show them we are brave!"
- c. "Get dressed!"
- d. "Hurry! Don't delay!"

789.

- a. Tum heard Pech tell him this and grabbed the *sampot*
- b. That was long and pleated. Tum looked closer
- c. And noticed the turban, the black silk *pahom*
- d. And *sampot* that the King had presented to him.

790.

- a. Tum put on the garment that was embroidered in three layers
- b. With a "chicken body" design using silk thread and gold braids.
- c. He dressed in a green shirt, then meditated deeply on his objective.
- d. He stepped forward and turned around to speak.

791.

- a. "Pech, my brother! Prepare your things!
- b. "Make it quick!" Pech took his flute
- c. And took the ring that Tum recently bought new.
- d. Tum adorned his fingers with sun-stones.

792.

- a. Pech put on his *sampot* and went to grab a green shirt.
- b. Fully dressed, the two of them strutted back and forth.
- c. They walked for a long time,
- d. And arrived at the cemetery after a while.

793.

- a. At that time of day, it was exactly approaching
- b. The scheduled time to eat. Mats were spread on the ground
- c. And people were drinking and eating, rolling around
- d. And swimming. Then everyone ran to hide in the forest.

794.

- a. Completely senseless, they suspended people from trees and chopped
- b. Their bodies close to death without a thought of fear.
- c. Busy eating and drinking, people fell to the ground one by one.
- d. Some would quickly run to grab a leg of beef.

795.

- a. The various people preparing the food for the great wedding
- b. Were happy one and all and laughing uproariously.
- c. They prepared raw meats of chicken and duck by quickly dipping them
- d. In boiling water and cleaning out all the gizzards, liver and lungs.

796.

- a. Tum and Pech emerged from the jungle.
- b. Without fear, they entered the wedding area furtively.
- c. Mixing with the large crowd, they moved right in front of people.
- d. They were not worried or afraid.

797.

- a. But there were evil deeds in store for Tum.
- b. Oh, people! Listen and remember well!
- c. Keeping himself hidden, Tum went towards Teav,
- d. Weaving through the crowd. In his happiness, he didn't see the misery that awaited.

798.

- a. We should take the Dhamma as our foundation.
- b. The guidance of the precepts is a bridge for going forward.
- c. It enables us to avert wrongdoing and extinguish evil.
- d. Don't succumb to temptation or naive stupidity.

799.

- a. Don't take Pech and Tum as models.
- b. In Tbong Kmom, the people were obsessed with pleasure.
- c. They played with the fortune of good Teav, and made her
- d. Sink into oblivion.

800.

- a. At that time, Tum and Pech
- b. Had entered the wedding hall for some time.
- c. The sun had set. Around them
- d. The guests were gathering together. Tum went quietly up to

801.

- a. The house and politely greeted
- b. The elder parents pleasingly without being rude or disdainful.
- c. Tum had become very drunk and acted impudently.
- d. He behaved as though he were greater than his teacher.

802.

- a. Greater than everything! He expounded
- b. In song, "The Teav over here has no thought of her husband.
- c. "She avoids him. She hates Tum. Ducks for cover when he approaches.
- d. "Her husband has been here a long time already, but she does not recognize him!"

803.

- a. Teav was crestfallen and tense.
- b. She answered back directly.
- c. "Sweetheart, I am drained and weak.
- d. "You arrive and criticize me. My love,

804.

- a. "You have no reason at all to think this way. I have missed you every
- b. "Moment, day and night! Oh, Tum! Don't
- c. "Distrust your sweetheart! Venerable, you may
- d. "Beat me to death!"

805.

- a. Tum said, "Oh, Teav! My love!
- b. "Your virtue is gone! You are sullied like a formerly polished stone!
- c. "I arrived a long time ago. You should have shown your love for me!
- d. "Dear Teav hid herself! Where could you hide?"

806.

- a. Teav answered saying, "Why are you so quick to criticize, my dear?
- b. "Your wife has been in agony.
- c. "I rolled cigarettes and prepared areca for you!
- d. "I ladled alcohol for you to drink,

807.

- a. "And sent it to my dear man. I ask your consideration a moment."
- b. Teav responded eloquently.
- c. She sat close beside Tum sobbing.
- d. Tum understood and forgave his beloved.

808.

- a. Teav, weeping with regret, threw her body on the ground.
- b. She recounted the original promise they had made to each other.
- c. "Oh, my dear! There is no other like you!
- d. "I love you truly! Why do you argue?"

809.

- a. Tum, crying, answered, "Oh, my precious!
- b. "You wrecked our plans by coming to have another husband!
- c. "Your virtue left you instantly!
- d. "Come close to me, so I can hold my beloved girl."

810.

- a. Tum moved close to Teav, and they embraced one another.
- b. Having hugged and kissed, Tum said, "Teav!
- c. "Depend on me, your husband! Don't worry!
- d. "Don't fear they will stab or shoot me! Or that we will lose to anyone!

811.

- a. Tum continued, "My dear, pour some wine for me.
- b. "I'll drink then take you
- c. "To the city to have an audience with the King.
- d. "He will rectify this sorry ordeal."

812.

- a. Teav listened to the words Tum spoke.
- b. She handed him an areca cigarette, which Tum smoked,
- c. And ladled wine for him to drink. Teav looked at Tum's face.
- d. He looked nauseated and dazed.

813.

- a. Teav went into the hall
- b. And lied down sad and confused.
- c. She rolled over against the wall.
- d. Someone slid the curtain closed tightly.

814.

- a. Teav's mother could not contain her anger.
- b. Ignorance blinded her.
- c. A violent rage possessed her.
- d. She could not think clearly or overcome her anger.



815.

- a. She screamed, "Ah Chun! You have power.
- b. "We had better think of something quick!
- c. "Grab that rascal Tum! That impudent thief!
- d. "Pull him from the house and drop him down!

816.

- a. "Call all your gang to take him away quickly!
- b. "Stab and shoot him dead! Don't let him remain
- c. "To weigh down the house, weigh down the earth with his hateful person!
- d. "Teav's reputation has become a disgrace now already!"

817.

- a. "He went too far with his sweet talking! The rascal's behavior
- b. "Is fearless! Whatever he's up to, the rascal knows no end!
- c. "He hugged my daughter and wouldn't let her go!
- d. "He called Teav to answer him! He necked with her and teased her!

818.

- a. "He kissed her everywhere and squeezed her breasts!
- b. "He had no thought of her reputation whatsoever! That scoundrel!
- c. "His hugs and kisses provoked her! He made it into a game!
- d. "He doesn't know how to respect anyone!"

819.

- a. Oh, time! At that time, Ah Chun
- b. And Murn Guon, who was the son he planned to marry to Teav,
- c. Gave rise to evil thoughts toward Tum.
- d. They had no pity or compassion for Tum.

820.

- a. In their aversion and fury,
- b. They drew their swords and banded together.
- c. They grabbed Tum and stabbed and hacked at him without discussion.
- d. They tied Tum very tightly arms aback like parrot wings.

821.

- a. Teav heard people say they had surrounded and seized her husband.
- b. Distraught, Miss Teav fretted.
- c. Tum said, "Oh, Teav! It looks as though I am done for!
- d. "I am leaving to go to sleep upon the earth!"

822.

- a. They grabbed Tum and beat his entire body to a pulp.
- b. Blood flowed without end. They split open his head.
- c. Clots of blood choked him as he tried to speak.
- d. They told Miss Teav that her husband was leaving her.

823.

- a. "Stay here my sweet beloved!
- b. "They stabbed me. They shot me dead!
- c. "My death bereft my mother of her child,
- d. "And let our family name disappear! I am going to die!"

824.

- a. Hearing this, Teav pleaded with them saying,
- b. "Please sirs, have pity on him!
- c. "If you must tie him, don't tie him with rattan.
- d. "Tie him with this black turban. Give me this one thing!"

825.

- a. They surrounded Tum and tied him with rope.
- b. They stabbed at his face one after the other without compunction.
- c. They did not have the slightest thought of showing compassion.
- d. They committed sins of violence, even though Tum had done no wrong.

826.

- a. Tum, hurting, lied on his back, blacking out.
- b. He vomited blood. He had hot flashes like being dipped in boiling water.
- c. His thirst was so great, it practically cracked open his stomach.
- d. His flesh was pierced through. It was separated from the blood vessels.

827.

- a. Exhausted and defeated, he sobbed loudly.
- b. His weakness brought him to his knees. Gasping, he raised his hands.
- c. With palms joined, he prayed to The Triple Gems
- d. That sustain us every day and whose worth is so great.

828.

- a. "Oh, Master! If I am to die,
- b. "Please, Master, help me to be an iron fortress of strength.
- c. "Absolve me of my miserable sins, so they are not part of me.
- d. "Please enable me to reach heaven."

829.

- a. The people who had abducted Tum were a clever group.
- b. They had some sense of propriety as well. In their cruelty,
- c. The scoundrels said, "Tum! Try meditating
- d. "On the Buddha's teaching now!"

830.

- a. They brought Tum to an open space by the side of the road.
- b. Near the base of a *bodhi* tree, he fell unconscious.
- c. He lied next to the tree exhausted and dying.
- d. He gasped his last breath as his body stretched out stiffly.

831.

- a. He was dead. Extinguished was his material existence.
- b. Tum's body was impermanent like a pile of sand.
- c. The large gathering that is the world of people
- d. Encounters many pitiful schemes.

832.

- a. Tum's intimate love for Teav was without fault.
- b. Tum's wrongful death here was because of a woman.
- c. Lovers of the world!
- d. Oh! You should avoid this fate!

833.

- a. The people who had taken Tum away to be killed,
- b. Had already returned quickly
- c. To the hall. At the house, they greeted Ah Chun
- d. And discussed what had happened at that time.

834.

- a. It was late at night,
- b. And Teav was lying down with her head covered, sad and confused.
- c. Miss Noe, Teav's nanny, leaned toward Teav and said,
- d. "Oh, Teav! While I was sleeping I eavesdropped

835.

- a. "And heard people murmuring noisily together.
- b. "They said Tum had been taken away to be killed.
- c. "At mealtime, they surrounded him and grabbed him,
- d. "Then led him away quickly as planned."

836.

- a. Teav heard Noe say her husband was dead.
- b. Teav immediately jumped up. She screamed and wept saying,
- c. "Oh! The man I love with all my heart!
- d. "Oh, husband! When will I see your face?

837.

- a. "I'm sorry, dear husband! We loved each other so much!
- b. "So much regret! I will never be able to close my eyes to sleep!
- c. "At eating time, I will have no inclination but to mourn.
- d. "Tum was tricked and drowned in boiling water until dead!

838.

- a. "Oh, Tum! You used to respect me.
- b. "You never hit me because you loved me.
- c. "I will wait, watching the road for your arrival every day and month.
- d. "I regret this so much, my dear! Disbelief comes over me!

839.

- a. "As far as I'm concerned, Tum didn't give up
- b. "Until losing his life. They took him away
- c. "And threw him in the forest. Oh, sweetheart!
- d. "Oh, Tum! Now you take your rest upon the ground!

840.

- a. "You use the earth as a pillow!
- b. "Oh, Tum! You take the quick clouds,
- c. "Which block the sun, to be the roof of your forest cemetery
- d. "And darken my soul!

841.

- a. "Oh, Tum! Enough already! I have no will to live!
- b. "It would be better to die along with you and let this life be done with!
- c. "My mother has no pity for her child!
- d. "She doesn't practice what she preaches!

842.

- a. "Enough already, mother! You stay here!
- b. "I live just for you to boss around!
- c. "Now, your heart is like a pure Chinese!
- d. "You become angry because I don't agree to marry Guon!

843.

- a. "You go ahead and marry him yourself,
- b. "And take your plan to its end!
- c. "What to do? I must take care lest I run into
- d. "The guests coming in droves to see Guon the groom.

844.

- a. "I must bid goodbye to this life today.
- b. "Such is the consummate evil taking place here.
- c. "That decided, I only wish to act quickly.
- d. "Noe, don't regret this. Noe..."

845.

- a. Teav knelt down and composed herself quickly.
- b. She raised joined hands to her head.
- c. After bowing three times, she spoke,
- d. "I offer homage to the Buddha,

846.

- a. "The Dhamma, and the Sangha.
- b. "At this moment, I ask you for help,
- c. "Supreme Indra, as well as that of your divine sons.
- d. "Please help me to be fast and effective as I have vowed.



847.

- a. "I pray you will hide my body.
- b. "I depend on you to put me out of sight. Please gods,
- c. "Conceal me. Don't allow anyone
- d. "To find me as is my wish.

848.

- a. "Noe! Please, sister Noe, pity me!
- b. "Go get a knife and give it to me!"
- c. Noe had the knife, and they both left.
- d. Intending to go to Tum, they continued on.

849.

- a. Reaching the field, they entered the forest and searched for Tum.
- b. They saw some children in a noisy group. They were playing while
- c. Tending water buffalo, making sure they didn't eat the rice paddy.
- d. Teav stood and yelled, calling them to come in a hurry.

850.

- a. Teav greeted them nicely then instructed them.
- b. "Now, brothers and sisters, listen to what I have to tell you.
- c. "Go to the house of the person who is my mother.
- d. "Children, keep going until reaching the house of the wedding.

851.

- a. "People will still be eating. Some of them drinking
- b. "Excitedly. Now, children, you must sing out,
- c. "'All elders! Listen to me!
- d. "'Wedding guests one and all! Teav has gone to kill herself!

852.

- a. "'They have gathered together into one what were three bodies!
- b. "'She died in the cemetery where earlier in the day
- c. "'They had brought Tum to be put to death.
- d. "'His death beneath the *bodhi* tree is but a sacrifice to the Buddha!'

853.

- a. "Remember children what I have told you! I must leave you now."
- b. The children took the water buffaloes by the ring and led them forward.
- c. Teav walked on until finding the exposed
- d. Body of Tum. She called Noe to get the knife.

854.

- a. Teav lied down next to her husband and grasped his hand.
- b. With the areca knife, she slashed at herself,
- c. Severing the column of her throat. In death,
- d. Their two bodies were entwined and overlapped in union.

855.

- a. All three, the two women and the man, together in death.
- b. The corpse of Tum, whom they slaughtered without discussion,
- c. As well as the corpses of the women, dead because of Tum.
- d. They went to meet him by slitting their own throats.

856.

- a. To speak now of the children who still remembered clearly
- b. The words of the excellent Teav. Remembering without
- c. Forgetting at all, they went up to the house and barged into the wedding party.
- d. They dared to sit down among them, and spoke at risk.

857.

- a. They sang out shrilly, and everyone turned their heads.
- b. Sitting in the middle of the circle of the wedding ensemble,
- c. They bellowed sadly, calling the parents.
- d. "All ye grandfathers and grandmothers!

858.

- a. "Listen! Men and women! This thing
- b. "Should be considered carefully! You should stop what you're doing!
- c. "Wedding guests one and all, Teav has disappeared.
- d. "She sent me to tell you they have died all together!"

859.

- a. The parents didn't hear clearly what they said.
- b. They dropped their plates and stood up awkwardly.
- c. "Shhh... Don't speak! Let's hear them out."
- d. They got up and went hurriedly to the children making unpleasant faces.

860.

- a. Ah Chun questioned them. "Children, sing that once more!
- b. "This time, my children without mincing your words.
- c. "When you get it clear, you can eat!
- d. "Don't worry about telling the truth, children!"

861.

- a. The children sang once again slurring their words together.
- b. Hearing them grumble, the children changed around their evasive reply.
- c. "Oh, sir! Tum and Teav are dead on their backs!
- d. "Dead as well is Miss Noe, Teav's servant!

862.

- a. "We are thirsty for rice wine! Please, grandfather, get some for us!
- b. "Please bring us a tray of rice and food
- c. "With pork meat, venison, chicken, duck and fish!"
- d. The children ate the food and stopped speaking completely.

863.

- a. Everyone hurried to go
- b. Search the house. They bent over every corner calling out.
- c. They looked for Teav and Noe everywhere.
- d. They had not lost hope, not believing what the children had said.

864.

- a. The old woman who was Teav's mother was frustrated.
- b. She was unnerved as though a cooking fire burned under her.
- c. She trembled. Her head shook.
- d. She was deathly pale, unable to accept or understand what was happening.

865.

- a. She was sad-faced, pale and tense with anger,
- b. Enraged and frantic.
- c. She cursed Teav's servants unchecked. "Do you know
- d. "Anything about keeping a close eye on her?

866.

- a. "None of you thought
- b. "That you had better attend to her all together!
- c. "That perverted thief was allowed to snatch her away fearlessly
- d. "And cut up her head into seven pieces!

867.

- a. "You fools dared to let my child disappear!
- b. "You were not careful! You have only words!
- c. "You're only good for telling lies, eating and shitting!"
- d. Turning around, they saw Tum's body. They jumped in terror.

868.

- a. They didn't know at all what to make of it. The young toughs,
- b. Saw him and became more and more ecstatic.
- c. People bunched together trying to get a look at them.
- d. Teav's servants gawked in confusion. "They look like chickens and ducks!"

869.

- a. The head servant joined them.
- b. She answered directly, "They are powerful! Don't try to get too close!
- c. "We are all people, not ghosts!
- d. "Teav, who is her daughter, truly said

870.

- a. "She was going down there to defecate.
- b. "We tried to dissuade her in every way,
- c. "But she refused to listen. Why, grandmother and grandfather,
- d. "Is it normal for people to be at odds with others?

871.

- a. "As for the other older women who took time to see to Teav,
- b. "Normally, impetuous people don't know how to think about what they're doing.
- c. "Very angry, they proceed in ways that are bad. Neither did the parents
- d. "Sternly guide her. They called her only to say this or that.

872.

- a. "They didn't know how to take anyone's words into consideration.
- b. "Other elders as well knew the situation.
- c. "This Teav very clearly had a husband.
- d. "Why they forced her into the marriage with Guon, I don't know."

873.

- a. Teav's mother listened closely. She was nearly out of her mind.
- b. "Oh, Teav! From the beginning, your temperament was different.
- c. "You were very different from me like a bone!
- d. "I was stern with you because of this, and so I talked to you that way!

874.

- a. "I said I would give you to Ah Chun!
- b. "It's too much! Tum cursed you! He cut you up!
- c. "He shot you! He threw you away! He cut out your insides!
- d. "To kill you again, they scorn you in death!

875.

- a. "What wrongdoing have I committed?
- b. "I only gave you life and arranged your marriage,
- c. "So that Ah Chun would spread his wealth.
- d. "Rings and gold belts, I wished to give you,

876.

- a. "To let you wear them.
- b. "His possessions would be your dowry.
- c. "Now, my precious dear is gone forever!
- d. "Teav, my child! You were everything to me!"

877.

- a. At that time, Teav's mother suffered alone.
- b. Delirious, her mind spun ceaselessly.
- c. She stumbled along, mixing up day and night.
- d. Thinking about everything at once, she walked on calling out to people.

878.

- a. At that time, all of the wedding guests
- b. Threw away their plates, bottles, and baskets of rice.
- c. They threw away the pots. They threw away the frying pans & stomped on them.
- d. Some carried away the already boiled beef.



879.

- a. Fearing for their lives, they hid or ran calling for help.
- b. The grandchildren went home immediately.
- c. Entering the forest, they kept a close eye out afraid someone would grab them
- d. And kill them like Tum and add them to the group.

880.

- a. The royal official Ah Chun and Guon, his son,
- b. Were very angry. Trying to control themselves, they got up hurriedly.
- c. They left and went to the forest until recognizing the bodies of
- d. Tum, Teav and Noe. They were truly dead.

881.

- a. Approaching them, they pulled Tum's corpse that was still tied up.
- b. They decided to take him away to bury close by.
- c. They loosened and took the *pahom*. Looking closely,
- d. They saw blood drip down. Despite themselves, they became spooked.

882.

- a. Extending their hands, they quickly grabbed the body away.
- b. Recognizing the top of Teav's beautiful head,
- c. Ah Chun became frightened. He raised joined hands
- d. And prayed to the gods.

883.

- a. After burying the corpses, Ah Chun returned to the house.
- b. Wanting revenge, he called Teav's mother to blame her.
- c. "You old perverted thief! You opened your mouth
- d. "Once too often for your own good!

884.

- a. "Seeing I have wealth that is quite satisfactory,
- b. "You talked rot! You fraud!
- c. "Your plan, old lady, very clearly was
- d. "To add my slaves to yours!"

***Part 11 (885-1044): The Punishment of Ah Chun & Teav's Mother***

(Pech's flight back to the Palace; the King's rage at hearing of Tum's death; the King's vow to punish Ah Chun; the King's journey to Tbong Kmom; Ah Chun's fear of the King after receiving word of his arrival; the King's rejection of Ah Chun's appeal for mercy; the judgment of the Ministers; the punishment; the King's return to the Palace.)

885.

- a. This scene, if told, would go on and on,
- b. So we will digress and not present anymore of it.
- c. Instead, we will continue by taking this opportunity to describe
- d. Venerable Pech, who has emerged from hiding in the forest.

886.

- a. He had hid nearby, fearful of the power of Ah Chun.
- b. Guon, his son, was planning
- c. To destroy Tum's life. Tum's plan to steal Teav from him
- d. Brought fear to everyone involved.

887.

- a. When Pech had realized this, he went alone
- b. Into the hilly forest of reeds and *tbaeng* trees near the braziers
- c. And *tiel* trees and short trees in the cemetery.
- d. He boarded a boat and lied flat and motionless.

888.

- a. He was worried and tense.
- b. He was nearly scared to death.
- c. Well into dusk, it had become completely silent.
- d. Pech was anxious about being separated from Tum.

889.

- a. Pech was unable to focus his thoughts.
- b. He was unable to sleep. His face was pale.
- c. He laid his arm over his forehead and burst into tears.
- d. "Oh, Tum! You have abandoned me! I am distraught!

890.

- a. "I loved you truly! Now, you've left me!
- b. "Oh, Tum! Your Pech is left all alone!
- c. "Your little brother lies upon the ground of a wild glade.
- d. "The calls of the crows and kites blend together.

891.

- a. "I accompanied you both day and night.
- b. "We never stopped to rest.
- c. "Since we lived at the Grand Palace,
- d. "We resided together with never a problem.

892.

- a. "We never left the Palace.
- b. "When the King called for us,
- c. "Oh, Tum! We went to have an audience with his Highness
- d. "And surpassed everyone else with our abilities!

893.

- a. "The King showed mercy on you.
- b. "He bestowed Miss Teav upon you whom he admired.
- c. "His compassion for you and I would not endure.
- d. "Because of Guon, you lost the glory that was yours for years to come."

894.

- a. Venerable Pech hid his face. In sorrow, he cried.
- b. He raised his hands and saluted.
- c. "Oh, spirit of Tum! Your little brother now,
- d. "On this day, for good or bad I ask to take leave.

895.

- a. "Tum, you must remain, my dear brother.
- b. "Now Tum, don't hold a grudge against me.
- c. "Go up to partake in the happiness of heaven.
- d. "Let's pray to meet together again in the next life."

896.

- a. This will tell of Pech's journey.
- b. He planned to slip out unseen.
- c. We will tell of Pech constrained by worry,
- d. As he tried to give orders expediently to the others

897.

- a. Who were his comrades to hurry.
- b. Pech told them, "Untie the boat quickly!
- c. "Store the oars and mooring post so we can leave!
- d. "Don't delay! Let's get going!"

898.

- a. Pech's comrades had simultaneously scrambled into the boat.
- b. The chopping of the oars panicked the fish that darted away.
- c. Some dove and some swam for cover in the grass.
- d. The oars drove deep through the water. Absorbed, they rowed

899.

- a. A long distance until emerging at the head of Svay Island.
- b. The sun was setting in the distance. They turned closer to the disk.
- c. Directly westward, it hung on the horizon.
- d. Then the sun disappeared behind a mountain range.

900.

- a. They tried to row faster in order to reach the Palace,
- b. Then stopped the boat to rest in the water.
- c. They paddled to the shore intending to eat.
- d. Pech kept thinking of poor Tum.

901.

- a. Pech was not thirsty or hungry. He didn't eat at all.
- b. He missed Tum more and more.
- c. Remembering Tum, he cried unable to restrain himself.
- d. "Oh, Tum! Where have you gone?"

902.

- a. "I don't see you anymore! Tum, you are truly my soul mate.
- b. "My marvelous brother has gone away. Heavy loads were divided between us.
- c. "You are no longer among the living. You didn't even say goodbye.
- d. "Tum has left his fiancé. There is no doubt.

903.

- a. "They did away with your life without discussion.
- b. "They cut short your years to the point of death.
- c. "Without a thought, they dragged you to an open grave,
- d. "All because of unfortunate Teav, whose mother insisted she marry Guon.

904.

- a. "Evil has taken over everything!
- b. "You couldn't restrain yourself. Why didn't you remember
- c. "The Abbot's prediction that there would be bad consequences?
- d. "His words should have been taken as a medicine to prevent this.

905.

- a. "To put it another way, evil is like an iron bludgeon.
- b. "When it beats on someone, that person will die a certain death.
- c. "It won't spare your life like the son of a noble family.
- d. "This is according to the teachings which the Buddha spoke."

906.

- a. At dawn, the sun shone.
- b. Pech was frustrated and alone.
- c. He told everyone, "We must forge ahead
- d. "As fast as possible! I fear we'll never arrive!

907.

- a. The oarsmen would not stop until reaching the Palace.
- b. As evening approached, a stillness
- c. Overshadowed the world
- d. Edging out the daylight.

908.

- a. They gathered up the equipment and oars and carried them over their shoulders
- b. And made their way to the Palace immediately.
- c. Some broke off from the group to go home. The women greeted their husbands,
- d. And they exchanged news since their separation.

909.

- a. Soon all of the people from here had gathered to hear the news.
- b. "When you went to Tbong Kmom, was everything all right?"
- c. Some of the men told the people that Tum had died.
- d. Then they left to meet the King.



910.

- a. Coming before the King, Pech positioned himself carefully. His hands
- b. Were raised over his head as he bowed to salute him.
- c. He addressed the King, "Your Highness dispatched me to Tbong Kmom
- d. "To give notice to your subjects regarding the marriage of Tum and Teav.

911.

- a. "As your humble servant, I must report that
- b. "Ah Chun has executed Tum.
- c. "Your Highness, show pity on me! I fear your anger!
- d. "Spare me! Let me live!

912.

- a. "Tum died along with the two others, making it three persons in all.
- b. "He guessed that Teav and Noe would continue to live.
- c. "He didn't know then what his actions would lead to.
- d. "Now, Teav and Noe are dead also."

913.

- a. The King listened to Pech describe the situation.
- b. He became frightfully angry. He spoke, "You!
- c. "Tell the Infantry
- d. "And the Royal Servants to assemble quickly!

914.

- a. "Go call the Royal Ministers
- b. "To perform religious offerings. Have them hurry!
- c. "Make ready the Royal Seat for
- d. "Foot gear and water this morning!

915.

- a. "Tell the commanding officer of the Army
- b. "Not to delay a minute!
- c. "Go grab that home wrecker whose wrongdoing knows no end!
- d. "For what he's dared to do, he'll be reduced to ashes!

916.

- a. "The scoundrel dared to oppose me!
- b. "For that crime, he will be chopped up, boiled, harrowed over, and buried alive!
- c. "His dead body will be pounded into the earth!
- d. "Don't doubt me for one second, Ah Chun!

917.

- a. "He dared to tear and burn up my command!
- b. "For his crime, tie up and shoot that Guon, his son!
- c. "Make every last one of them suffer for their crimes!
- d. "His brothers and sisters who joined in his work!"

918.

- a. At that time, the court officials and Royal Ministers listened to
- b. The King's orders. They bowed and crept away,
- c. And withdrew from the Palace to go to their homes to meet together.
- d. Being rushed, they did not wait to take action.

919.

- a. They sped up to meet the deadline.
- b. The King gave orders to make preparations for the journey to Tbong Kmom.
- c. Orders were given for equipment to be made ready.
- d. All kinds of meats were quickly wrapped up & sacks of rice and plates were prepared.

920.

- a. They packed the provisions in containers,
- b. Along with various kinds of spices.
- c. When they finished preparing, they entered the Palace to inform the King directly.
- d. The King ordered them to prepare his things.

921.

- a. His entire regalia was pure gold.
- b. The resplendent and divinely beautiful jeweled crown.
- c. The glorious King carefully
- d. Put on the gold adornments and bathed his face.

922.

- a. The King had already ensconced himself.
- b. He called the young Queen
- c. And said, "Sweet beloved,
- d. "You and our oldest son"

923.

- a. "Must stay behind, sweetheart.
- b. "Don't be concerned for me.
- c. "You must protect and represent
- d. "The Palace. It is the Royal Army's turn

924.

- a. "To alert the people everywhere of this matter,
- b. "And warn them of the necessary consequences.
- c. "The King's reputation must remain spotless.
- d. "We must assume the responsibility to protect it against wrongdoing.

925.

- a. "I won't be gone for very long.
- b. "I will return quickly, too. Don't doubt this.
- c. "Since I am the reigning King,
- d. "You must remain here as the august First Queen."

926.

- a. After instructing the Queen, King Ream Reach,
- b. Who had power over the land
- c. And domain of Indra and Vishnu,
- d. Started off and departed.

927.

- a. They marched around the Palace together three times.
- b. All the infantry troops displayed aloft
- c. The King's regalia as they paraded along the road
- d. Almost to the royal vessel in the village.

928.

- a. Exactly in synch, the army fired their weapons,
- b. As the King boarded the vessel.
- c. Into the royal vessel intended for his Majesty,
- d. The troops boarded and joined together to back-paddle the boat to leave.

929.

- a. The fancy, curved boats pulled away in formation.
- b. Straight ahead, they surged forward one after the other.
- c. Keeping close to the royal vessel, the oarsmen proceeded straight ahead,
- d. And the *laiñ* fish churned through

930.

- a. The river. Aboard the King's vessel,
- b. The Army Orchestra prepared
- c. To entertain the handsome King.
- d. The clever singers broke into song.

931.

- a. "Oh, *sakavat!* Great Siva,
- b. "Who is the refuge in every direction of the world!
- c. "King Ream Reach is strong and brave!
- d. "His power is incomparable!

932.

- a. "*Sakavat!* Noble Wind, scudding the clouds!
- b. "They hover and come to block the sunlight.
- c. "It is cool as though someone fanned our bodies.
- d. "The King relaxes. Nothing worries him."

933.

- a. "*Sakavat!* We are young.
- b. "Our voices are not developed, Master!"
- c. Since it was night, the King was sleepy. It was pitch dark.
- d. Lying down his head, the King got comfortable.

934.

- a. The King began to fall sleep.
- b. He reclined quietly unable to relax. Thoughts turned in his mind.
- c. The thoughts would not subside. He was choked with emotion
- d. He stirred and bolted up.

935.

- a. Troubled, the King thought about Tum.<sup>50</sup>
- b. His death tore him away from the Monarch.
- c. Feeling abandoned, the King fell silent.
- d. Fixedly, he kept thinking about Tum.

936.

- a. The air was getting cool.
- b. The sun eclipsed the moon.
- c. The sky turned almost dark as people waved to greet the King.
- d. They saluted him, raising their hands extended together.

937.

- a. They respectfully asked the King to dine with them.
- b. A number of the wedding party gathered together along the shore.
- c. A mother pushed eight young girls so to be seen by the King.
- d. Despite all the commotion, the King slept the entire time.

938.

- a. Seeking an audience with the Monarch,
- b. The All-Powerful and Supreme One,
- c. The people approached him with their hands carefully joined.
- d. The voices of the attractive young girls called out.

939.

- a. "*Sakavat!* We ask to have an audience!
- b. "We ask to come near Your Grace!"
- c. But the King seemed distant.
- d. He was beside himself with regret for Tum.

940.

- a. The King was regretful, distant and unhappy.
- b. He lied down but could not sleep. His face looked sad.
- c. He continuously thought of Tum. He nearly collapsed.
- d. It was not right that Tum lost his life without reason.

941.

- a. Horrible remorse beset him.
- b. Then the King recovered and tried to be brave.
- c. The various army troops that had to work
- d. Tried to contain their worries for they were in the service of the King.



942.

- a. They rowed the royal vessel while calling out to one another.
- b. Announcing they were not far from their destination, the boats quickly spread out.
- c. One after the other, they formed a line.
- d. Through the shallow water, they sped and reached some islands.

943.

- a. They arranged the boats in a neat row and informed the King,
- b. Who was the protector of the world. He greatly missed Tum.
- c. Each of the commanding officers then counted off all of the islands
- d. To the best of his knowledge.

944.

- a. The King asked, "This island, what is its name?"
- b. "Pardon me, I don't know. As I remember,
- c. "The River Ta Ek, the River Ta Em
- d. "And Roka follow converging directions."

945.

- a. The King questioned the official politely. "What else?"
- b. The official, hearing the question, moved closer and answered quickly.
- c. Bowing, he informed the King that the shore to the north had been subdued
- d. By the army a long time ago.

946.

- a. They conversed until the head of the army answered.
- b. "Dear, Sir!" He prostrated himself before the King.
- c. Bowing, he spoke making comparisons
- d. And associations relating to the names of the places.

947.

- a. He addressed the King politely, going on at risk
- b. Of exile. "That is the River Kuy, Your Excellency.
- c. "We will go beyond there, without deviating from our course.
- d. "Straight ahead now is

948.

- a. "A place called Srok Tlok Chrow. After a while,
- b. "We will come to Port Chi." The army officer informed the King completely,
- c. Listing the places ahead without reluctance.
- d. "The next region is Taer Chi Hai. Then,

949.

- a. "Further on, we will soon reach Port Pkay M'raech."
- b. Just then, the King got up from his bed feeling relieved.
- c. He thoroughly washed himself. Not long afterwards,
- d. He questioned Pech who responded in turn.

950.

- a. Pech turned toward the King whose face seemed angry.
- b. He crept straight up to him and bowed.
- c. "Forgive my hesitancy. Have mercy on me."
- d. In a while it would be evening, and they would not be able to travel.

951.

- a. Then all the troops of the King's army assembled.
- b. Attendants prepared the food and white, polished plates.
- c. They polished the glasses and various utensils.
- d. They set out the things at bathing time, then the King sat to eat.

952.

- a. They summoned the young *pinpeat* orchestra
- b. And selected an attractive person to be brought
- c. To join the group.
- d. Sitting comfortably, she projected her voice to accompany the music.

953.

- a. "Sakavat! August and all-powerful Ream Reach!
- b. "Over your life, there are disturbed feelings.
- c. "Give us to understand your feelings. Make us current with them.
- d. "Your beauty and grace are perpetual.

954.

- a. "Sakavat! Oh, the flower of the wild *kravan* tree!
- b. "The afternoon arrives, and it is fragrant still.
- c. "The fragrant smells waft deep into the night.
- d. "Now, Your Highness wants to move on.

955.

- a. "Oh, Master! You have tremendous merit!
- b. "Your journey will proceed tomorrow at dawn.
- c. "The sun will shine through the intermittent rain.
- d. "Your body is trim, fit and attractive.

956.

- a. "You could be confused with a god descended
- b. "From Heaven and just come here."
- c. Then the King spoke to his advisers. "If we
- d. "Consider carefully and quickly,

957.

- a. "Which course of action shall we take here?"
- b. The advisers stopped to think, then described their strategy in detail.
- c. "If you please, don't rush this.
- d. "Your Highness should adjourn to the Royal Pavilion.

958.

- a. "Wait as official word is dispatched,
- b. "And the people inform each other of your arrival.
- c. "A royal envoy has departed with utmost speed
- d. "To the home of Ah Chun already."

959.

- a. "Mobilize all the troops and people
- b. "To build a roadway quickly.
- c. "If anyone refuses to cooperate, we will take him away
- d. "To be killed without giving him a chance."

960.

- a. The King listened as all the military advisers
- b. Addressed him. Then He spoke,
- c. "Ah, dispatch a message to Ah Chun quickly. Don't worry.
- d. "Organize it as soon as possible."

961.

- a. The team of advisers raised joined hands
- b. To salute the King. They wrote the message
- c. Then stamped it with the Royal Seal and gave orders that it be delivered
- d. Straightaway by royal decree.

962.

- a. The messenger delivered the missive to its destination.
- b. He personally climbed the stairs up to the house and spoke forth.
- c. "Ah Chun! A prepared letter
- d. "Stamped with the Royal Seal of His Excellency!"

963.

- a. Governor Ah Chun, his son and wife,
- b. Heard the messenger. They were nearly feverish as they shook head to toe.
- c. Terrified, their mouths trembled. They were scared to death.
- d. They had ghostly expressions, charred black.

964.

- a. Ah Chun's wife & son roused themselves and hurried inside the house.
- b. They took out a *taok* table and waited.
- c. Keeping still, they endured all five senses,
- d. Remembering with fear the King's power.

965.

- a. They raised joined hands in salute.
- b. They prostrated themselves on the ground while positioning their hands,
- c. Putting them above their heads.
- d. Then they prayed keeping themselves prostrate.

966.

- a. Ah Chun carefully listened to the message.
- b. It told them to have a road built.
- c. It told them to make the road elevated and appropriate for
- d. The King to travel along and view the village.

967.

- a. The servant who delivered the King's message
- b. To Ah Chun finished and turned back directly.
- c. We will stop and digress
- d. To describe Ah Chun upon knowing the situation.

968.

- a. Obsessive thoughts turned inside him.
- b. His guess was that the King would not pity him.
- c. Being upset, he swooned.
- d. "Oh, me! It seems the end has come!"

969.

- a. He spoke to his son and wife.
- b. "Oh, child! Your father is bitterly angry!
- c. "It seems we will die all together!
- d. "Misery will beset us soon!

970.

- a. "It seems His Highness
- b. "Will sentence me to death since he
- c. "Had given a letter to Tum as well
- d. "Saying I am not devoted to the Monarch."

971.

- a. Ah Chun feared the Monarch's power.
- b. The King would punish not only him.
- c. He consulted his family. Although he thought they should hide,
- d. From the King, there was no hiding place.

972.

- a. Ah Chun was in fear for his life.
- b. With mounting worries, he gave orders to start
- c. Making the elevated road to his armed forces
- d. Who began shoveling, cutting and clearing the land.

973.

- a. After giving orders, Ah Chun led his son to walk
- b. Among the soldiers while giving commands. There wasn't anyone
- c. Who dared refuse to comply with the Royal Edict,
- d. For fear of the mighty King.



974.

- a. Nearly everyone held a hatchet, reaping hook or knife
- b. To dig and pry out every last stick of bamboo.
- c. Anyone without a son, summoned their daughter
- d. To lug earth upon her head or shoulders or in sacks with a *raek-saeng*.

975.

- a. Intimidated by the power of Ah Chun's high rank,
- b. The people listened to him, trembling with fear and respect.
- c. Ah Chun returned home
- d. And decorated everyone then went to greet

976.

- a. And prostrate himself before the King.
- b. He was careful to prepare offerings of every type,
- c. Including sugar palm, coconuts, betel nut, bananas, pineapple, jackfruit and mango.
- d. He scrambled to find every type of animal, such as white ibis,

977.

- a. Peacocks, turtledoves, pigeons and wild deer.
- b. The meat, tendons and blood vessels were used as a base for soup.
- c. He killed and took the horn of a rhinoceros as a lucky charm.
- d. He fought off his worries and did not take a break.

978.

- a. Having found the offerings, he displayed them upon tables.
- b. The smoked meats and grilled meats and deer jerky
- c. Were arranged according to type. He divided everything among the attendants,
- d. And called for the village chiefs and their wives.

979.

- a. Gathering together the women and men of the delegation, Ah Chun
- b. Cautioned them to take care. For good results they were not
- c. To bring their children along in case they cried
- d. While the King was sleeping. This would not be tolerated.

980.

- a. After they arranged everything, they didn't stop to rest.
- b. The men & women crowded around to load the offerings on their heads  
and shoulders
- c. Or use *raek saing* to carry them in baskets and trays.
- d. An ox cart transported the seeds of the *baeng* tree

981.

- a. To offer all the attendants of the First Queen.
- b. Preparing and rolling cigarettes, the young girls
- c. Boasted shamelessly and stupidly about gambling.
- d. Everyone bustled together and divided the cigarettes among themselves.

982.

- a. They left the house and arrived at the King's camp.
- b. The King was in the Royal Pavilion.
- c. Various dignitaries and a team of advisors
- d. Were having an audience with King Reamea who was the Supreme Leader.

983.

- a. In attendance were the Royal Ministers
- b. Of the glorious Sovereign. It was a bad time for Ah Chun to meet
- c. The powerful and Great One,
- d. Who governed victoriously over the four branches of the Army.

984.

- a. Governor Ah Chun led the delegation,
- b. Along with his son and wife, to present themselves before the King.
- c. Coming closer, he saw His Grace,
- d. The King, was meeting with his advisors.

985.

- a. The chief ministers and advisors
- b. Were gathered before the King in close ranks.
- c. Ah Chun delivered the offerings,
- d. Supposing that the King would show mercy on him.

986.

- a. After he presented all the offerings,
- b. Ah Chun raised his hands in salute over his head
- c. And kept them properly positioned. During the meeting,
- d. The King had no pity or respect for Ah Chun.

987.

- a. King Ream Reach, the powerful and meritorious,
- b. Who protected the people and was the overseer
- c. Of all places and villages, including the Buddha's remains,
- d. Listened, rumbling, ready to smash the offerings at any moment.

988.

- a. The Monarch glared at him clearly displeased.
- b. Unnerved, Ah Chun's tears flowed staining his face.
- c. Seething with anger,
- d. The King's intentions were still

989.

- a. Twisted and black. He was uneasy. He felt unclean.
- b. He didn't want to let Ah Chun go back.
- c. He could not abate his anger.
- d. He summoned The Royal Armed Forces.

990.

- a. "Now, all ministers! Gather to consider this crime!
- b. "See that you do not show pity on this enemy thief!
- c. "The ghostly derelict came here with his bundles of grilled meats!
- d. "Take up the books and record his detainment."

991.

- a. The King told his advisers
- b. And army commanders to confer.
- c. The various ministers came to meet,
- d. Prostrating themselves under the Monarch's gaze.

992.

- a. The King said, "All advisers,
- b. "Confer and seek judgment according to your function.
- c. "Whoever is guilty will be shackled and chained.
- d. "He must be put in a dark prison to think about his crime.

993.

- a. "Don't have mercy! Use the women and men of Tbong Kmom
- b. "To go forth to chop and drag
- c. "The bamboo and wood. Have them cut, shovel and sweep the area
- d. "Bare. Have them clean it up completely!

994.

- a. "The area will be used to dig a pit,
- b. "A large hole. Then take a wide, long container
- c. "And pound it into crossed lines bent backwards
- d. "So it conforms to the shape of the pit."

995.

- a. The chief ministers listened to the King tell them
- b. Angrily and loudly not to be too long in their deliberations.
- c. The military commanders responded,
- d. But the King could not relax or assuage his torment.

996.

- a. One advisor who had a brilliance
- b. For understanding every kind of legal matter said,
- c. "The corps of city guards should be divided up for a surprise attack
- d. "And shackle or detain the provincial legal chief."

997.

- a. A minister responded,
- b. "The jurisdiction of Ah Chun is not legitimate any longer.
- c. "This rascal secretly plotted against the King.
- d. "The scoundrel dared to arrange the marriage of his son against the King's orders."

998.

- a. Another military chief responded,
- b. "Oh, dear sirs! Hold on, my brothers!
- c. "Something else is true also, not for nothing
- d. "Is the saying from our great-great grandparents' generation,

999.

- a. "'There are hind legs because of the front legs.'
- b. "The crime had to have been spread among his associates.
- c. "Ah Chun, Teav's mother, as well as their nephews and uncles.
- d. "Their entire families are all implicated in this crime."

1000.

- a. The ministers conferred according to their function.
- b. They made judgments using their understanding of good behavior
- c. And the exact requirements of all laws. They stopped deliberating
- d. And discussing in fine detail their thoughts.

1001.

- a. The legal advisors had not yet come to an agreement.
- b. One responded saying, "We've had enough for now.
- c. "No one should give judgment if we are not in complete
- d. "Agreement with each other over the crime of each individual."

1002.

- a. The Army Chief concluded,
- b. "Tomorrow, we must meet until making
- c. "A decision." They assembled to debate the case back at the hall.
- d. "Sirs, don't make calculations based on opinion."

1003.

- a. An advisor took everything into consideration without any restraint,
- b. "Sirs, don't be surprised by any of these crimes.
- c. "As for the people who came and contributed to the unrest,
- d. "They came following the scheme of Ah Chun himself.

1004.

- a. "They could not refuse for fear of his power.
- b. "He beat them. He cursed them. He harassed them.
- c. "For the crimes of all those people, I say
- d. "To arrange for their inclusion as hereditary slaves.

1005.

- a. "As for the crime of Ah Chun, his son and wife,
- b. "And all the wealth of the entire family line,
- c. "The brothers, sisters and grandparents of that scoundrel,
- d. "Along with Teav's mother, they were all of one mind.



1006.

- a. "For their crime, they must be harrowed or plowed over!
- b. "They must be boiled alive in a frying pan and left to dissolve
- c. "Away to nothing!" The ministers
- d. Rendered judgment quickly and went to tell the King at once.

1007.

- a. They documented the time, day and month of their judgment,
- b. And passed the word along to the others.
- c. Then they called everyone to gather together
- d. To inform the King.

1008.

- a. They raised their hands holding the judgment of the Assembly.
- b. They placed it in small metal trays held above their heads.
- c. "On behalf of all of us,
- d. "I, Your Majesty, have rendered judgment."

1009.

- a. The august King glanced at the judgment approvingly.
- b. He replied immediately.
- c. "Ah! Quite correct, ministers.
- d. "The truth was not lost on you."

1010.

- a. The King told them, "Hurry!
- b. "Tomorrow at dawn, do not delay.
- c. "Select an elephant that is docile,
- d. "Because the children and women will want to parade along with me."

1011.

- a. The ministers of the Royal Court understood the situation.
- b. The Minister of War of the Supreme Commander,
- c. The Sovereign, did not sit still.
- d. He called the groups of Royal Escorts to assemble.

1012.

- a. When they had gathered together, he told them to greet
- b. The people's beloved Monarch.
- c. "The procession will begin now. We must get in formation."
- d. They fastened the howdah and positioned the mounting ladder.

1013.

- a. They sheathed the ivory tusks in front of the howdah,
- b. And fastened the howdah frame to the elephant's tail.
- c. They piled pillows inside and wrapped rugs around it to block the wind,
- d. Then prepared a place for the Buddha image.

1014.

- a. They prepared the Royal Vehicle and decorated it
- b. With an elegant motif.
- c. Into the Royal Vehicle was placed the Buddha image before all else,
- d. Decorated according to the traditional style.

1015.

- a. At that time, as for the august
- b. Ream Reach- powerful and aesthetic, beloved
- c. And awe inspiring- the King boarded the Royal Vehicle
- d. As army troops followed in step, their hands holding weapons.

1016.

- a. The Royal Servants spread out in order.
- b. Before and after, the forces were braced for action.
- c. The King rode the elephant glowing with adornments.
- d. The effulgence inspired fear and awe.

1017.

- a. The entire harem of concubines
- b. Rode elephants gloriously decorated.
- c. They rode behind the King in all his splendor,
- d. Beaming confidence and fearing no one.

1018.

- a. The Chief Ministers and Royal Troops
- b. Then mounted their elephants to escort the King.
- c. Some rode white horses and galloped vigorously
- d. Holding precious items, crossbows and firearms.

1019.

- a. The escort blocked the sun with parasols joyously.
- b. They spread out in a neat circle gloriously happy.
- c. The invading army proudly
- d. Paraded up along the road to the Royal Pavilion.

1020.

- a. Having arrived, the troops formed close ranks to escort the King.
- b. In departing,
- c. The King looked around at the village and people
- d. Forbidding anyone to remain.

1021.

- a. The Army's commanding officers
- b. Had arranged themselves by rank and were waiting for
- c. The ministers' wives and children to fall in line.
- d. They were told to bow to receive the King.

1022.

- a. The orchestra played a tune exactly in step with the procession.
- b. It was impressive how they kept the beat.
- c. The musicians answered each other with exclamations and pauses,
- d. Adroitly following the voices of the women.

1023.

- a. "*Sakavat!* Oh, sorrowful heart!
- b. "Our faces can't help but show our pity.
- c. "Our Master has traveled here with a troubled mind.
- d. "Out of love for them, he is distracted.

1024.

- a. "He has closely viewed the world on the way to Tbong Kmom.
- b. "He deeply mourns the loss of Tum.
- c. "Tum used to please completely the powerful King.
- d. "One should regret a life so incomprehensible.

1025.

- a. "*Sakavat!* Oh, wild *komphleng* flower!
- b. "Quiet is the august Monarch.
- c. "Although he has indomitable strength,
- d. "He is confused, distant and extremely melancholy.

1026.

- a. "*Sakavat!* Oh, frangipani flower.
- b. "The Sovereign stumbles out of worry.
- c. "He strives to get there. What act separated them?
- d. "Everyone here is so worried.

1027.

- a. "Oh, loss! Your Highness, have mercy on us!
- b. "We beseech you, Master, to go away!
- c. "Seek relief awhile as it is stifling hot!
- d. "Then call everyone to carry you away."

1028.

- a. The august and supreme King did not relax.
- b. He ordered to have the music stopped.
- c. As for the group of young women singers,
- d. The King said to have them leave.

1029.

- a. In an intimidating voice, he issued a decree,
- b. Stating that only Satan could correct the situation.
- c. He conferred with the ministers to get the punishment right,
- d. Then called the Royal Guards directly.

1030.

- a. The Guards, compelled by the King,
- b. Were told to go immediately and prepare for carrying out the punishment.
- c. In accordance with their evil wrongdoing,
- d. The guilty were gathered around the pit.

1031.

- a. The guards dug into the earth deep and wide,
- b. Just neck-high. After, they summoned
- c. Seven families, pushing aside the children.
- d. Their relatives were overcome with misery.

1032.

- a. The guards then took the water buffaloes and yoked them to a metal harrow.
- b. They led them to rake over the guilty one pass.
- c. The guards split open their heads without hesitation.
- d. With that malicious act, the shoulders of the prisoners had disappeared.

1033.

- a. The guards assembled the big offenders,
- b. And brought them forth without delay
- c. To be boiled alive. "Now, guilty ones,
- d. Don't you have anything to say for yourselves?"

1034.

- a. The guards lit a fire to bring the huge vat of water to a boil.
- b. They piled the wood up high.
- c. When the fire lowered, and the tongues of flame ceased in the furnace,
- d. They threw in the bodies, and in an instant, they were consumed.

1035.

- a. They went up in smoke.
- b. How pitiful! Who could help them now!
- c. Their lives were reduced to ashes, one after the other!
- d. This misery was because of acts that led them astray!

1036.

- a. We turn perplexed in the wheel of rebirth.
- b. Every being, whether old or young,
- c. Should accept misery and compose his thoughts.
- d. That uncertainty, you cannot control.

1037.

- a. Because the Doctrine of Non-Self says, there is only void.
- b. If we don't learn the Shore and Island, we will pass away in misery.
- c. Anyone who commits sin inevitably
- d. Falls deep down into hell.



1038.

- a. Now, all people! Women and men!
- b. We are born as people in the world.
- c. You have seen and heard this new composition.
- d. Now, take heed and learn.

1039.

- a. Establish a direction. Don't guess when it comes to knowledge.
- b. You must meditate on the causes of a problem.
- c. Get to know everything until you are no longer confused.
- d. Don't let anything stop you.

1040.

- a. Let's speak about the great Monarch.
- b. Finished with his task, The King started back quickly
- c. To return to the Royal Capital.
- d. The officials of every group assembled together

1041.

- a. And escorted the King down from the Royal Carriage.
- b. The soldiers all rowed their boats
- c. Vigorously in formation without faltering.
- d. Everyone was excited upon arriving.

1042.

- a. His Majesty entered the Royal Palace
- b. To the home where he normally stayed
- c. In happiness and comfort.
- d. The fortunate Sovereign was well pleased.

1043.

- a. The story of Tum Teav ends here.
- b. Now, people, reflect on the story's plot
- c. And every event. Don't shy away.
- d. If you are confused about something, don't keep it to yourself.

1044.

- a. This story, the Venerable
- b. Who resides at the temple in Komprau-
- c. He has composed and given to future generations
- d. To let all young people know.

### **Chapter 3: *Tum Teav* in Cambodian Literary Criticism**

#### ***Introduction***

The importance of *Tum Teav* in Cambodian literature and society have made it a popular topic of literary criticism, especially in the study guides produced in the 1960s and early 1970s, following Cambodia's independence from the French. In this chapter, various examples of Cambodian literary criticism on *Tum Teav* will be discussed. Of particular interest are viewpoints regarding the authorship of the text and major themes in the story. We will consider how critical texts interpret the characters and events of the story, especially with regard to traditional codes of conduct and notions of power.

In the first section, we will look at the context in which the critical texts on *Tum Teav* were written, giving particular attention to the nationalistic sentiment that followed independence. Then, using the periodical *Kambujasuriya* as a primary reference we will consider how Cambodian responses to French assessments of Khmer literature was an impetus for the emergence of modern Cambodian literary institutions.

#### ***The Emergence of Cambodian Literary Criticism***

Along with the development of a national curriculum of Khmer literature in the late 1950s came the first texts of Cambodian literary criticism and pedagogical manuals. These critical texts, written by influential scholars

such as Nhok Thaem, Ly Theam Teng and Leang Hap An, not only defined and commented on the works that constituted the Cambodian literary canon.<sup>92</sup> They were also part of a nationalistic sentiment that came to a head after independence.

In this highly politicized atmosphere, there was a rush of activity to define Cambodian national and cultural identity.<sup>93</sup> Written and spoken language were examined in order to replace French loan words with Khmer. A commission was established at the Buddhist Institute to collect and document traditional folk stories.<sup>94</sup> The University of Fine Arts began to choreograph a repertoire of folk dances that depicted the daily life of different Cambodian ethnic groups.<sup>95</sup> Along with the Angkor Wat and Cambodian classical or court dance, the texts that comprised the literary

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<sup>92</sup> See, for example, Nhok Thaem's "Study of Khmer Literature" (1959); Leang-Hap An's "Opinions on *The Rose of Pailin* (1959); and Ly-Theam Teng's *Khmer Literature* (1960).

<sup>93</sup> Penny Edwards. *Cambodge: The Cultivation Of A Nation 1860-1945*. PhD thesis, History Department, Monash University, 1999.

<sup>94</sup> Following Cambodian independence in 1953, a national effort was made to gather and record Cambodian folk stories. In the 1960s, the stories were published in a series of volumes under the title *Collection of Khmer Folkstories*. A total of 216 traditional Cambodian stories and legends are included in the "Collection of Folk Stories" published by the Buddhist Institute in collaboration with the Commission of Mores and Customs between 1965 and 1972 (Thierry, 1978:99-103). The publications were the result of collaborations between the Commission of Mores and Customs, established under Norodom Sihanouk's *Sangkum* government, and the Buddhist Institute. The references to the story of Judge Rabbit are based on episodes in the Buddhist Institute's 1968 publication of *Judge Rabbit*. This version was actually taken from the 1938 publication of the story in *Kambujasuriya*.

<sup>95</sup> Among these groups were the *Khmer Leur* or "upland Khmer," the Muslim Cham, peasant farmers, etc. (See *Khmer Folk Dance* by Sam-Ang Sam and Chan Moly Sam (Khmer Studies Institute, 1987) for descriptions of these folk dances.)

canon, including *Tum Teav*, were an important feature of Cambodia's new cultural identity as an independent and modern nation.<sup>96</sup>

After a hundred years of French influence, it is not surprising that the debate over the texts that comprised the literary canon was often framed in terms of Western conventions and in response to French assessments, for the most part negative, of Cambodian literature.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, throughout the colonial period French academics found little they considered "literary" about Khmer writing. The repeated use of stock heroes and repetition of familiar settings and story lines based on the previous lives of the Buddha, led French scholars to conclude that Khmer literature lacked the brilliance and originality they found in the temple architecture. In the words of the French Abbot and scholar, Joseph Guesdon, "toute la littérature khmère

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<sup>96</sup> In this context, the debate over the authorship of *Tum Teav* took on an importance that would probably not have existed in the past. In the past, the identity of the author and the date of composition of a text were not necessarily important features of a text. Literary texts were generally produced by and for Cambodia's Buddhist and monarchical institutions. Since the Theravadan period, Khmer writing has been primarily linked to religious and monarchical institutions. For the most part, monks or members of the Royal Court translated Pali texts or composed original texts based on Buddhist themes, particularly the life of the Buddha, to articulate Khmer Buddhist concepts. The monarchy supported the religious institutions, which in turn served to affirm the monarch's status as god-king. By producing texts for or about the monarch, a monk simultaneously praised the life of the Buddha or "Great Teacher" with whom the monarch was identified. In this way, the religious, historical and literary functions of writing were interrelated and interdependent. However, with the emergence of 20th Century literary institutions and the role of literature in affirming Cambodia's national identity, the identity of the author took on new importance.

<sup>97</sup> French academic study of Khmer culture and civilization was formalized in Cambodia with the establishment of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient in 1901.

n'étant qu'une suite des poèmes sur les vies du Buddha" [all Khmer literature is only a sequence of poems about the life of the Buddha].<sup>98</sup>

Guesdon's dismissive comment, made in 1906, was one of the earliest Western assessments of the literary value of Khmer writing.<sup>99</sup> As the inventor of the first Khmer type and avid reader and publisher of Khmer religious and didactic texts, Guesdon was well qualified to critique Cambodian literature. In doing so however, he was confronted with an unfamiliar aesthetic. Guesdon's Christian sensibilities were repulsed by scenes of the future Buddha giving away his children or engaging in promiscuity. Guesdon concluded that "si le brahmanisme a créé des chefs-d'oeuvre d'architecture au Cambodge, le buddhisme a tué la littérature" [if Brahmanism created the major works of Cambodian architecture, Buddhism killed literature].<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Guesdon, Joseph. "La littérature khmère et le Bouddhisme" in *Anthropos*, 1906:94.

<sup>99</sup> Earlier published studies of Khmer literature by the French were made by Aymonier (1878), Moura (1883), Taupin (1886), Leclère (1895) and Pavie (1898).

<sup>100</sup> Guesdon, 1906:94. Nevertheless, the Cambodian literary aesthetic that incorporates Brahman deities and cosmology in the telling of predictable tales on the lives of the Buddha provided a standard framework for Khmer writers well into the twentieth century. Indeed, Buddhist themes are still considered to be a defining feature of Khmer literature by prominent scholars such as the French-trained Cambodian linguist Saveros Pou. In "Études Ramakertiennes," for example Pou analyzes the character of the epic's hero King Rama and various events in the story in terms of Buddhist concepts. She argues that the influence of Rama in Cambodian culture is comparable to that of the Buddha. For Pou, the text illustrates the popular belief that Rama's renown is a result of his exemplary conduct in previous lives, and the glorification of his reputation follows the Buddhist practice of praising right action.

The Cambodian response to French assessments of Cambodian literature was expressed in the many nationalistic Khmer language journals and newspapers that appeared after independence. The introduction to Khim Sam Or's 1961 text *The History of Cambodian Literature* exemplifies this view:

"Under the iron yoke of imperial colonialism of the last 100 years, our people have been far removed from our culture. The French colonialists made us study and use their language and swallow the culture of their corrupt imperialism. Thus, many of us became stricken by their contempt and forgot the legacy of work of the Khmer people who have always had their own literature."<sup>101</sup>

In the next part of this chapter, I will argue that the emergence of modern Cambodian literary institutions was due in part to a nationalistic response to negative French assessments of Khmer literature. Using *Kambujasuriya*, the periodical of the Buddhist Institute, as a primary reference we will identify events that reflect the desire for both independence *and* Western recognition of Cambodian national identity. In doing so, we hope to gain a better understanding of the social and political context in which modern Cambodian literary institutions emerged and the critical texts on *Tum Teav* were written.

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<sup>101</sup> Khim Sam Or, *The History of Cambodian Literature*, 1961: introduction. Khim Sam Or was a former official at the periodical *Sammaki* [Solidarity], and this text is a compilation of material taken from the periodical.

## **Kambujasuriya**

For a number of reasons, *Kambujasuriya* offers a unique opportunity for studying the emergence of modern Cambodian literary institutions. The magazine was a publication of the Buddhist Institute in Phnom Penh for a continuous period of almost fifty years, beginning in 1927. Furthermore, it was one of the most prominent Khmer forums for serious scholarship in Cambodia during that time. Also, unlike so many other important resources destroyed by the Khmer Rouge, the complete collection is still intact and available for study in Western libraries.

As a publication of the Buddhist Institute (initially called the Royal Library of Cambodia) created by the École Française d'Extrême-Orient, the French were directly involved in the production of *Kambujasuriya*, especially during the early years. For example, Suzanne Karpelès was "conservateur de la Bibliothèque Royale," and articles by the French scholar Louis Finot, director of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient, appear in a number of the early issues. Thus, *Kambujasuriya* provides valuable information on the two key relationships for studying the emergence of modern Cambodian literary institutions. The first is the relation between French and Khmer language and scholarship, and the second is the relation between religion and literature.

To begin, consider the 1943 revision of *Kambujasuriya*'s bilingual table of contents. Prior to 1943, all of the items presented in the table of contents were listed in a single undifferentiated group, with the Khmer version on



one page and the French translation on the next. Beginning with the first issue of 1943, however, the items contained in the table of contents are divided into two groups under the headings *phnaek aksarsastr* [literary part] and *phnaek sasana* [religious part] on the Khmer page, and "Partie littéraire" and "Partie religieuse" on the French. This event is significant because it indicates a deliberate intention to designate the identity of an article as being either primarily religious or literary.<sup>102</sup>

Two earlier events that we will discuss at length are Kim Hak's introduction to his novel *The Waters of the Tonle Sap* published by *Kambujasuriya* in 1939, and *Kambujasuriya*'s 1942 Khmer translation of the article "Littérature cambodgienne" by the eminent French scholar

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<sup>102</sup> Previously, no distinction had been made. This differentiation also raises the question of the criteria used in assigning a text to a particular section. It is interesting to note that the literary section appears on the page physically above the religious section. When one considers the importance given to showing respect for the Buddha by placing Buddhist representations physically higher than whatever or whomever occupies the same space, this choice of layout is somewhat surprising. Indeed, the subsequent reversal of the two sections beginning in 1951, when the religious part was placed above the literary, one would indicate that their relative arrangement on the page was in fact a consideration. The apparent priority given to the religious section by this reversal is not born out however when one considers the disparity between the number of items in the religious section compared to the literary. The number of items in the literary section always exceeds the number in the religious by about a factor of three. Typical issues would have seven or eight items in the literary section and only two or three in the religious. In any case, this event marks the beginning of a definitive place for literature as such in the Buddhist Institute's publication.

George Coedès.<sup>103</sup> A point of interest here is the Khmer term *aksarsastr* [literature] used to translate the title of Coedès' article. The term also appears in Kim Hak's introduction to his novel and in the first Khmer-Khmer dictionary published in 1938 by the Buddhist Institute under the direction of Venerable Chuon Nhat. However, I found no entry for *aksarsastr* in Guesdon's 1930 Khmer-French dictionary. Nor is it in Tandard's 1935 Khmer-French dictionary. This would indicate that this Khmer term for "literature" was just coming into use in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Furthermore, its appearance in *Kambujasuriya*'s table of contents, initially in 1939 and subsequently in 1942, seems to anticipate the literary dimension to the publication formalized by the revision of the table of contents in 1943.

Taking up Coedès' article first, we will compare the article as written in the original French with its Khmer translation published by *Kambujasuriya* in 1942. Our purpose here is to demonstrate how differences between the original and the translation reveal an attempt to assert the value of Khmer literature in response to negative French assessments of Khmer writing, particularly in relation to Thai literature.

Coedès' article begins by applying the term "littérature" in its widest sense in order to assess the literary value of Cambodian writing, beginning with

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<sup>103</sup> Coedès, George. "La littérature cambodgienne" in *L'Indochine I*. Paris: Société d'éditions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales, 1931: 180-91; and, Coedès, George. "Ambi aksarsastr khmar" in *Kambujasuriya*, 1942, No2: 39.

the first known inscriptions of the 7th century. In each case however Coedès finds little evidence of literary value in Khmer writing. He discounts the classical inscriptions written in Sanskrit because of the possible involvement of Indian scholars in their composition. As for the classical inscriptions written in Khmer, Coedès states that their limited subject matter and uninspired style make them primarily of linguistic value.

Despite the apparent absence of Khmer literary writing during this period, Coedès does try to make a case for the existence of an ancient Khmer literature. He argues that the culture which produced the remarkable architectural accomplishments of the Angkor period, including the temple bas-reliefs depicting scenes from the Indian legends, must have produced other writing besides these Sanskrit and Khmer inscriptions. Coedès concludes that there must have been Khmer vernacular versions of the Indian legends written on animal skins that were subsequently destroyed by time and weather. Consequently, according to Coedès, we are ignorant of the Cambodian literary accomplishments that must have accompanied the splendors of the Angkor Empire.

Turning to the modern inscriptions that date from the invasion of Angkor by the Thais in the fifteenth century, Coedès once again finds a lack of originality and inspiration. He attributes this to the radical change in Cambodian religion and culture following the decline of the Khmer civilization under Thai domination. Coedès reasons that the post-Angkor

rulers would have been too preoccupied with defending themselves against further Thai invasions to support literary production. Reminiscent of Guesdon, he goes on to say that the Theravadan Buddhism that replaced the Mahayanan Buddhism and Brahmanism of the Angkor period discouraged personal expression and moreover was an "enemy of art." Finally, Coedès suggests that Khmer literary expression during the modern period was overshadowed by Thai influence, which, ironically, was a transformation of the previous influence of ancient Khmer culture on the Thais.

It appears that Coedès' appraisal of Cambodian literature goes out of its way to find correspondences between the literary quality of the writing and historical circumstances. Accordingly, he argues for the existence of valuable Khmer literary texts which reflect the culture of the ancient Angkor aristocracy but have been lost to time and weather, then he dismisses the extant writing of the subsequent period of decline as uninspired or the product of Thai influence. More than the accuracy of his appraisal of Cambodian literature however it is the response to Coedès' article by *Kambujasuriya* as expressed in its 1942 Khmer translation that we are interested in here.

While *Kambujasuriya* certainly recognized the authority and to some extent the validity of Coedès' argument, it also attempted to resist it in order to assert the literary value of Khmer writing. Comparison of the French original and the Khmer translation reveals the omission of

significant passages of the original that describe Khmer literature as inferior to or dependent on Thai literature. For example, referring to the literary value of the ancient inscriptions written in Khmer discussed above, Coedès writes:

"L'intérêt des inscriptions khmères est considérable en ce sens qu'elles nous révèlent un bon nombre des anciennes institutions du pays, mais du point de vue de la 'littérature', elles valent presque uniquement par ce qu'elles nous font connaître de l'état ancien du langage; *c'est en vain qu'on y chercherait comme dans les inscriptions siamoises de Sukhothai (XIIIe-XIVe siècles) un cachet tant soit peu littéraire.*" (italics added)<sup>104</sup>

[The interest of the Khmer inscriptions is considerable in the sense that they reveal to us a good number of the ancient institutions of the country, but from the point of view of 'literature' their worth is almost only in what they make known to us of the previous state of the language; *it is in vain that one will search there, as in the Siamese inscriptions of Sukhothai (XIIIth-XIVth centuries), for a {literary} character, so little of it is literary.*]

The Khmer translation deletes the final statement, "c'est en vain qu'on y chercherait comme dans les inscriptions siamoises de Sukhothai (XIIIe-XIVe siècles) un cachet tant soit peu littéraire," in which the literary value of the Khmer inscriptions is seen by Coedès as inferior to that of the Thais. Then on the next page, where Coedès discusses the loss of Khmer literature written on animal skins, the Khmer translation omits the entire paragraph in which the following statement appears:

"Cette ignorance ne se rapporte pas seulement à la période qui s'étend du XIIe au XIVe siècle et qui vit fleurir l'ancienne civilisation khmère. Elle s'étend aux siècles suivants. Si malgré ses revers, le Cambodge a connu quelque production littéraire, elle a disparu de la même façon et

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<sup>104</sup> Coedès, 1942:180.

l'on ne peut s'en faire une idée approchée que par ce qui reste de la littérature siamoise de l'époque d'Ayuthya (1350-1767)."<sup>105</sup>

[This ignorance doesn't concern only the period which extends from the XIIth to the XIVth centuries and which saw the flourishing of the ancient Khmer civilization. It extends to the following centuries. If, despite its set-backs, Cambodia experienced some literary production, it disappeared in the same way and one can only get an approximate idea of it through what remains of the Siamese literature of the Ayuthya period (1350-1767).]

A third instance of the omission of negative comparisons with Thai literature in the Khmer translation can be seen in the concluding paragraph of the first section of the article which omits the phrase "vis-à-vis de la siamoise" from the following sentence:

"Telle semble être l'explication plus vraisemblable du marasme de la littérature cambodgienne et de son infériorité *vis-à-vis de la siamoise*, dont le premier monument est cette magnifique inscription du roi Râma Khamhèng, cri de victoire et d'orgueil qui fait déjà pressentir dès la fin du XIIIe siècle le déclin du vieil empire khmèr."<sup>106</sup> (*italics added*)

[Such seems to be the most reasonable explanation of the miasma of Cambodian literature and its inferiority *in relation to the Siamese*, whose first (literary) achievement is this magnificent inscription of Râma Khamhèng, a cry of victory and pride which anticipated, as soon as the end of XIIIth century, the decline of the old Khmer empire.]

Besides the omission of "vis-à-vis de la siamoise" which mitigates the unfavorable comparison with the Thais, Coedès' concluding statement above is further softened in its Khmer translation that I translate as follows:

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<sup>105</sup> Coedès, 1942:181-2.

<sup>106</sup> Coedès, 1942:183-4.

"All of those things should supply the reasons that made Khmer literature not have any improvement into the following period, during which time the Siamese built their first temple whose brilliant inscription of King Rama Khamheng is a cry of victory and glory and lets it be known that the ancient Khmer Kingdom had begun to decline from then on (the end of the 13th century)."

I would argue that these three excerpts from *Kambujasuriya's* Khmer translation of Coedès' article demonstrate the magazine's attempt to defend the literary value of Khmer writing and anticipate the formal inclusion of a literary section in its table of contents beginning in 1943.

Another example of the attempt to assert the literary value of Khmer writing can be seen in *Kambujasuriya's* 1939 publication of Kim Hak's introduction to his novel *The Waters of the Tonle Sap*, four years prior to the revision of its table of contents. The story was serialized in three issues that year, the first of which was preceded by an introduction by Kim Hak in which he states his reasons for writing the story. The introduction begins with his own negative assessment of Khmer literature and intellectuals and esteem for French and Western influence.

"This story, 'Waters of the Tonle Sap,' came to be from my feelings of disappointment and concern about our Khmer literature which is not very advanced. These days the ignorance which had (previously) overcome all Cambodians has progressively lessened due to the goodwill of the great French nation that has brought intellectual works of every kind to all the people of Cambodia."<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Kim Hak. *Dik Danle Sap* in *Kambujasuriya*, 1939 No1: 7.

Then, in the following paragraph, Kim Hak seems to revise his position and suggest that his reason for writing the story was to assert the existence of Khmer literature to “those who represent the country who only know our Khmer language slightly.” While the example of Western culture is apparently praised in the opening paragraphs of the introduction, the French negative assessment of Khmer literature is refuted in the following excerpt:

“As for my efforts to write this story, (they) come from two kinds of wishes:

1) To end the talk of those who represent the country who only know our Khmer language slightly and say the Khmer don’t have any books or stories that are easy to read. (They say) there are many books but they are only about Buddhism or the life of the Buddha. Many are composed in verse that makes someone who knows a little Khmer read without understanding.<sup>108</sup>

Given the fact that Kim Hak’s introduction was written in 1939, during French rule of Cambodia, his criticism of the French, however subtle, was nevertheless a bold act. Not only was *The Waters of the Tonle Sap* the first Cambodian modern novel. Kim Hak’s reason for writing it was one of the earliest attempts to assert the value of Khmer writing and culture in opposition to the French.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Kim Hak, 1939:8.

<sup>109</sup> For more on the emergence of the modern Cambodian novel, please see Klairung Amratisha, *The Cambodian Novel: A Study of Its Emergence and Development*, PhD thesis, SOAS, University of London, 1998.



Looking ahead from *Kambujasuriya's* 1943 revision of its table of contents, there are some interesting events that signal the emergence of *Kambujasuriya* as one of Cambodia's first modern literary institutions and most important locations for articulating Cambodian cultural and national identity. Beginning in 1962, for example, the literary section of *Kambujasuriya* begins with the following epigram:

"Khmer literature, the Khmer should care for it,  
Let it be long lasting, well-maintained and pure,  
Because a nation's writing is that nation's true mark.  
If its writing disappears, the nation vanishes."<sup>110</sup>

As the first and most prominent forum for the discussion of Cambodian literature, *Kambujasuriya* published some of the earliest examples of modern Cambodian literary criticism. In 1956, *Kambujasuriya* published the article *Aksarsastr khmaer sankhep* [Khmer literature] by Ray-Buc. This article was followed by the work of other Khmer scholars such as Ly Theam Teng, whose "Problems of literary diffusion" appeared in 1962; Dik Keam, whose work on Khmer language literature, particularly the *Reamker*, began to appear in the same year; Leang Hap An, whose text on the history of Khmer literature was serialized from 1968 to 1971.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> The Khmer word *chiet* translated here as "nation" could also mean "people" or "race." Thus, the term could be interpreted as referring to either national or ethnic identity or both.

<sup>111</sup> The establishment of the Khmer Writers Association in 1956 was another important event in formalizing the study and appreciation of Khmer literature.

Along with these early articles of literary criticism came the increased importance of the identity of the writer. Biographical sketches and photographs of writers began to appear in *Kambujasuriya* in 1966. Biographies of monks accompanied with pictures continue to appear in successive issues throughout 1966 and 1967. Then, at the end of 1967, biographical sketches of Khmer writers begin to appear.<sup>112</sup>

With the appearance of the 1969 article "The Writer's Task in Building Up the Nation," the identity of the writer takes on an explicitly political dimension. If the identity of the writer was previously subsumed by the monarchical and religious institutions within which he functioned, with the emergence of modern Cambodian institutions of literature, the writer took on a more independent role as social critic and activist.

### ***Literary Criticism on Tum Teav***

In this section, we will present examples of Cambodian literary criticism on *Tum Teav*. The first part deals with the issue of the story's authorship, and the second part discusses major themes in the story.

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<sup>112</sup> It is interesting to note that the attention given to the identity of the writer seems to follow a hierarchical progression that begins with Prince Norodom Sihanouk and continues to monks before reaching the modern Khmer writer. After a series of photographic essays portraying Sihanouk, published between 1963 and 1965, biographies of monks begin to appear in 1966, starting with Venerable Chuon Nath and Venerable Huot That.

Under Norodom Sihanouk, primary and secondary education, along with extensive literacy programs, was expanded, and the study of Cambodian literature became available nation-wide. For more on this, please see: Amratisha, 1998:50-63.

## The Authorship Controversy

The question of *Tum Teav*'s authorship was a matter of contentious debate in the 1960s. In this section, we will present several viewpoints that represent a range of positions on this issue. Special attention is given to the work of Ouk Saman, whose extensive research on *Tum Teav*, along with his interesting philosophy of justice, will be discussed at length. In brief, Saman argued that while it is likely that Sandhor Mok composed a version of the story, there was insufficient evidence to assert that he is the text's legitimate author.<sup>113</sup> We will also discuss the viewpoints of Leang Hap An and Kong Somphea. Leang Hap An acknowledges the controversy over the authorship of *Tum Teav* and briefly explains why Sandhor Mok could not have written the version of the story written in 7-syllable meter. He concludes however that Venerable Som's manuscript was not an original work. In contrast, Kong Somphea, in a strongly nationalistic tone, argues that Venerable Botumthera Som is not only the text's legitimate author. He is also a national hero.

### Leang Hap An (1962)

In 1962, a critical text on *Tum Teav* by Leang Hap An, a teacher of Khmer language and literature and member of the Khmer Writers Association

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<sup>113</sup> Saman's argument was in response to a group of scholars comprised of Hang-Thun Hak, Eng-Soth, Neang-Ho and Sam-Thang, former professors of Khmer literature at Lycée Sisowath in Phnom Penh, who asserted that the legitimate author of the text was the famous 19th century poet Santhor Mok.

(KWA), was published by the KWA.<sup>114</sup> The text was written as a study guide for baccalauréat students in the third and first year classes in which *Tum Teav* was taught. Leang Hap An's text on *Tum Teav* was also part of an effort by Cambodian literature scholars and the KWA to affirm the value of Khmer literature and compensate for the lack of critical texts on important literary works. There is a short foreword to the Leang Hap An's text written by Hel Somphea, the president of the KWA, in which he states:

"The Khmer Writers Association decided to publish this useful text for students of literature because we have noticed that our country lacks theoretical analysis for understanding important ideas of various stories in the Cambodian literature curriculum. That it is also a means to raise the value of our national literature during this time is another reason."<sup>115</sup>

Leang Hap An's analysis of *Tum Teav* begins by addressing the question of the author. He states his position on the issue clearly stating that the version of the story in 7-syllable meter is by Venerable Botumthera Som. Leang Hap An bases his decision on information in the introduction to *Tum Teav* where Venerable Botumthera Som identifies himself by spelling out the letters of his name.<sup>116</sup> In his response to the argument that *Tum Teav* was originally a work by Sandhor Mok written in 1859, Leang Hap

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<sup>114</sup> In 1966, a new edition of the book was published by the publishing house Seng Guon Huot

<sup>115</sup> Leang Hap An, *Tum Teav: Explanation, Analysis and Commentary*, 1962: foreword by Hel Somphea.

<sup>116</sup> The Buddhist Institute's publication of *Tum Teav* by Venerable Botumthera Som appeared in 1962, the same year as the publication of Leang Hap An's critical text. Apparently, Leang Hap An had access to the Buddhist Institute's publication when he wrote his analysis.

An points out that Sandhor Mok would have only been thirteen-years-old that year and would have been too young to have produced the text:

"They say Sandhor Mok composed this story in 1859, that is, when he was only thirteen years old. The above idea couldn't be right, because at the age of thirteen, no one could have written a story full of such elegant verse and involved trickery like that."<sup>117</sup>

To this, Leang Hap An adds a second reason why Sandhor Mok could not be the author based on the poetic conventions during the period when he lived and wrote. He states that during that time the 7-syllable meter was not used for composing works of entertainment. Instead other classical meters such as *kakateh*, etc., were used. Based on this reasoning, Leang Hap An concludes that "*Tum Teav* in 7-syllable meter is definitely not the work of Sandhor Mok."<sup>118</sup> That said, Leang Hap An is still willing to concede that there might exist a version of *Tum Teav* written by Sandhor Mok.

"Perhaps it's true that there really is a *Tum Teav* by Sandhor Mok but in a classical meter. However, that text has not survived, or if it has, it has not been found."<sup>119</sup>

Furthermore, Leang Hap An concedes that it is possible that Venerable Botumthera Som referred to this hypothetical version of the story by Sandhor Mok written in a classical meter when he wrote his 7-syllable version. However, in the final analysis he argues that the 7-syllable version

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<sup>117</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:5-6.

<sup>118</sup> Leang Hap AN, 1962:6.

<sup>119</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:7.

of *Tum Teav* published by the Buddhist Institute and used in the national schools is a unique work written by Venerable Botumthera Som.

### Ouk Saman (1966)

In 1966, *A Study of Tum Teav* by the Cambodian scholar Ouk Saman was published. Ouk Saman was among the first wave of young intellectuals writing scholarly analyses on Khmer literature following Cambodia's independence from the French in 1953. As with Leang Hap An, Ouk Saman's textual analysis of *Tum Teav* begins with the question of the author. In the process of addressing this question, Ouk Saman uses a very interesting logic. He implies that to accuse Venerable Botumthera Som of plagiarizing Santhor Mok's text without conclusive evidence would be to commit a greater crime than if the accusations were valid. He articulates his argument this way:

"It is better to let a guilty man go free than to accuse an innocent man of a crime he did not commit."<sup>120</sup>

Ouk Saman explains that his analysis of the question of the author was made in response to the Ministry of Education's mandate that the text of *Tum Teav* based on a palm leaf manuscript be studied in the national curriculum:

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<sup>120</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:43. Ouk Saman's logic reflects the importance given to one's reputation and the irrevocable damage done to that reputation by accusations of wrongdoing, even if they are later determined to be invalid. Once spoken, the effect of the accusation cannot be reversed, and the taint to one's reputation, so highly prized in Cambodian culture, remains.

"In the educational curriculum, the Ministry of Education has explained that the text of *Tum Teav* that should be included as an educational material is the story on the palm leaf manuscript.

"To only say '*Tum Teav* on the palm leaf manuscript' in this way is not sufficient because according to current research two or three palm leaf manuscripts of the story have been identified, excluding *Teav Ek* by Nu Kon."<sup>121</sup>

Of the three palm leaf manuscripts, the two written in 7-syllable meter were of primary interest, because it is the meter used in the version of the story published by the Buddhist Institute under the name of Venerable Botumthera Som. We should note that the title page of the text published by the Buddhist Institute in 1962 simply says the story was "copied from the palm leaf manuscript." It does not give the name of the author. However, the preface, that is signed "The Buddhist Institute," does identify the palm leaf manuscript used to produce the text as the one inscribed by Venerable Botumthera Som in 1915 using the 7-syllable meter. The preface also mentions *Teav Ek*, the version of the story written in 1942 by Nu Kon using 8-syllable meter. It does not mention Sandhor Mok, which would lead the reader to believe that Venerable Botumthera Som's version is the first poetical composition of the story.

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<sup>121</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:29-30. The implication here is that the Ministry of Education not only instigated the inquiry into which palm leaf manuscript of *Tum Teav* should be used in the national curriculum. Ouk Saman's statement also implies that the Ministry of Education had not adequately clarified the issue. That is, it had not fulfilled its responsibility as the government institution charged with the task of defining the literary texts which are to be included in the national curriculum.

Venerable Botumthera Som's introduction, that follows the Buddhist Institute's preface, refers to another version of the story that preceded his text. However, it is not entirely clear whether he is referring to a written or oral version. Ouk Saman argues that the version referred to by Venerable Som was an older manuscript of *Tum Teav* which, like Venerable Botumthera Som's text, was also transcribed on palm leaf manuscripts using 7-syllable meter but whose author is unknown. In addition to this older text, Ouk Saman states that there is yet a third text written in various meters and in a Khmer style that would place it chronologically before the other two texts written in the 7-syllable meter.

Ouk Saman's attempt to resolve the question of the story's authorship is governed by the philosophy of justice presented above. He invokes this philosophy explicitly in his criticism of the group of Cambodian scholars who have asserted that the original palm leaf manuscript written in 7-syllable meter is by the nineteenth century writer Sandhor Mok.

"Regarding the text which all the scholars of one camp have identified and guaranteed to be by Sandhor Mok: In this matter, as we have indicated from the beginning, it is our understanding that it cannot be firmly concluded that the text in 7-syllable meter of unknown author is by Mok, because if one looks only at the body of the text itself without having an original copy which shows the date of inscription or the author how can one say the text is by Mok? As we have explained from the beginning as well, that if one just considers the language or sound of the writing and says it is by Mok, it doesn't work since there could have been other writers of the same or similar capability. Thus, according to our conclusion, we understand that if one claims the text to be by Mok, it would only be a calculated guess because when dealing with something that does not have conclusive evidence, one should be



careful as the court custom states: it is better to let a criminal go free than to blame a good person of a crime."<sup>122</sup>

The older palm leaf manuscript that these scholars attribute to Sandhor Mok did not survive the passage of time intact. It is missing its beginning and end, including the part that would have contained the name of the author. Saman states that any attempt to determine its author can only rely on considerations of the meter and the style of the writing. Accordingly, he presents various viewpoints that try to attribute a particular place and time to the two palm leaf manuscripts the precede Venerable Som's version.

According to one viewpoint, the manuscript written in various classical meters (MS 1) is the oldest and based on the style of Khmer that dates before King Norodom's reign (1860-1904), while the manuscript written in 7-syllable meter (MS 2) would have been written during King Norodom's reign when this meter first appeared. Based on the style of Khmer used, the scholars who ascribe to this viewpoint attribute the text to Sandhor Mok, who lived during the reign of King Norodom. An opposing viewpoint argues that while the 7-syllable meter was indeed developed during this period, it was not used for stories meant to entertain, such as

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<sup>122</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:42-43. By definitively attributing the ownership of this manuscript to Mok, this group of scholars would supposedly have the necessary evidence to indict Venerable Som with the crime of plagiarism. However, there is inconclusive evidence, and according to his principle of justice, Saman suggests they are committing the worse crime of slander. Saman responds by presenting a detailed analysis of the three palm leaf manuscripts of the story. This analysis demonstrates Saman's compliance with the philosophy of justice to which he also holds the other scholars accountable but with which they have failed to comply.

*Tum Teav*. This viewpoint would therefore place the date of MS 2 after Norodom's reign.

In response to these two conflicting viewpoints, Saman argues first that the virtuosity of the writing style of MS 2 need not be attributed exclusively to Sandhor Mok saying:

"... in truth, if Sandhor Mok were able to write so beautifully and well, there could have been others who could have written as well or comparably well, since Mok was not uniquely marvelous nor a god."<sup>123</sup>

Next, Saman presents excerpts of poetical texts written during Norodom's reign that use both classical meters and the 7-syllable meter to demonstrate that contrary to the first two viewpoints both meters were popular and used with stories meant to entertain. While Ouk Saman agrees that it is reasonable to assume that MS 2 is by Sandhor Mok, he argues that the scholars who insist on that viewpoint cannot do so with full assurance. Despite their analysis of the poetical features of MS 2, without the presence of the name itself clearly attached to the text the title of ownership remains uncertain. In the end however Ouk Saman is able to resolve this dilemma by placing Sandhor Mok's name between quotations saying:

"Thus, according to our viewpoint, we respectfully declare to all our friends the readers that from now on if anyone sees us use the phrase "the story by Mok" it refers only to *Tum Teav* that is speculated to be by Mok but is not really by Mok in the full sense. If in the future, some researcher comes upon proof that clearly shows that the text is by Mok,

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<sup>123</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:36

we will offer our congratulations because we greatly regret that such an important text in literature as 'the story by Mok' continues to need evidence as to its author without finding it."

Thus, by using quotation marks Ouk Saman is able to "staple" the name of "Mok" to the first version of *Tum Teav* written in 7-syllable meter. By virtue of Saman's literary "surgery," the text now has an author whose name is "Mok," and Saman can continue his investigation of the legitimate author of *Tum Teav*. That is, "Mok's text" can now be held up and questioned in terms of its relation with the other text of *Tum Teav* by Venerable Som. By transforming "Mok" into a pseudonym, Saman cleverly provides himself with a means to comply with his philosophy of justice and thus avoid the greater crime of making accusations against someone without conclusive evidence.

As with Leang Hap An, Ouk Saman bases his conclusion regarding the origin of the text on Venerable Botumthera Som's introduction to the story. For Ouk Saman, the first three stanzas of Venerable Botumthera Som's introduction provide the necessary proof for accusing Venerable Botumthera Som of purposefully misrepresenting himself as the true author of the text. Ouk Saman delivers his judgment on behalf of himself and his "friend" the reader after considering the opposing view:

"Currently there are two opposite viewpoints as we have already explained above. The first viewpoint claims that Venerable Som's text is truly his own and that he has composed the text in a way that is creative as we have analyzed before.

"This viewpoint is based on the evidence of Som's introduction which states:

1.
  - a. This will be the telling of a story composed
  - b. In an entertaining verse-form.
  - c. Ever since former times the story has been
  - d. Told, and over the years sentences have been lost.
2.
  - a. It is inexact, uneven, and unclear, and sentences are missing.
  - b. Striving to check and double check the meter of the discourse
  - c. We corrected it to be new so that this world
  - d. Could preserve it and continue to pass it on.
3.
  - a. We tried hard to keep it intact and corrected it with the thought of fixing it.
  - b. Afraid of going too far we committed ourselves to the task,
  - c. So not to have anyone say that we threw away what was important
  - d. We only adjusted it to conform with the times in which the story takes place.

"From among the stanzas of poetry excerpted together here, the holders of the first viewpoint become very excited with regard to the phrase that says: 'Told, and over the years sentences have been lost.' They try to claim that the thing that Venerable Som meant by the words 'Told, and over the years' was that the story had been retold from one person to the next over a very long time and so had some gaps and inconsistencies due to the element of time. Seeing this, Venerable Som tried to take the story that he remembered from hearing people tell it, with both its faults and virtues, and prepared it anew into this text. In order to preserve its legacy for the future, he prepared, mixed, saved and repaired it as he thought necessary. Thus, according to this viewpoint it is not true that Venerable Som saw some other previous text that belonged to someone else or that he took what belonged to someone else and merely edited and revised it.

"In this way Som's text of Tum Teav should be taken as the true creation of Venerable Som, according to this first viewpoint.

"However, according to our viewpoint, which is the second viewpoint, we understand that in truth it is not necessary to look elsewhere. The truth that says that Venerable Som saw a previous text belonging to someone else and that he took it, edited and revised it anew exists in the words and sentences of Som's introduction itself. When Venerable Som says that 'It is inexact, uneven, and unclear, and sentences are missing' the words 'sentences are missing' has the idea that there was a previous text belonging to someone else and in that text there were some incorrect meters and incorrect sentences. If the story were spoken in the usual sense one would not have to say 'sentences are missing' like this because with the act of telling it is understood already that it is for being heard only."<sup>124</sup>

Based on his interpretation of the introduction, Saman concludes that Venerable Som's text is not an original work:

"Thus, according to this analysis, by taking the writer's introduction as a basis we are led to conclude that the text that has Venerable Som's name and was published by the Buddhist Institute cannot be taken to be an achievement belonging to Venerable Som. Conversely, it is a text which belongs to another writer whose name we do not yet know and which Venerable Som only took to edit and revise ..."<sup>125</sup>

then:

"Venerable Som ... has changed around what belongs to someone else, deceptively burying it away from view, adding here and taking away there to make those who wouldn't know it understand that [the text] belongs entirely to him."<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:79-82.

<sup>125</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:86.

<sup>126</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:87.

Why is the question of the text's origin so important to Ouk Saman? Why isn't the endorsement by the Buddhist Institute sufficient for him to accept Venerable Botumthera Som as the text's legitimate author? What does Ouk Saman have to gain by accusing Venerable Botumthera Som, as well as this prominent cultural institution, of false representation?

For Ouk Saman, what's at stake is perhaps more than just the question of the text's authorship. It directly involves the authenticity of Cambodian culture, along with his function as one who safeguards that culture. In terms of literature, the future credibility of Cambodian culture would depend on the authenticity of the literary texts that are believed to constitute part of that culture and what it means to be Cambodian. If the origin of these texts is questionable so is the basis of the culture and the identity it represents.

### Kong Somphea (1971)

In 1971, Kong Somphea, a writer and literary scholar, published his study on *Tum Teav* by Venerable Botumthera Som.<sup>127</sup> Kong Somphea became a member of the Khmer Writers Association in 1968, the same year that he published his first novel. This was also the time when the Vietnam War was spilling over into Cambodia and when the Khmer Rouge was waging its guerrilla war, which by 1970 had escalated into a full-scale civil war

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<sup>127</sup> Kong Somphea's novels include: *The Life of an Orphan* (1968); *This Strange Existence* (1970?); *The General Pheakday Pen* (1971); and *The Achar Hem Chiev* (1972) [Khing Hok Dy, 1993:110].

against the U.S.- backed government of General Lon Nol.<sup>128</sup> Cambodia's political situation strongly affected Kong Somphea, and he expresses his belligerence toward the Vietnamese in the dedication page of his analysis of *Tum Teav*:

"This is dedicated to:

The spirit of my beloved father and mother

The young men and women and all the Khmer who died in the defense of the culture, civilization and ancient territory of Cambodia so not to let the invading Yuon [Vietnamese] steal them away.

Please let their spirits be happy and prosperous and guide the minds of those rotten Cambodians so they wake up and love their country and not be so deluded."<sup>129</sup>

In his introduction, Kong Somphea defines the objectives of literature in terms of the political context. For Kong Somophea, in the newly instated Khmer Republic, the reason for studying literature must change from the superficial desire to obtain a diploma. Using nationalistic rhetoric, he calls for a new breed of leadership and philosophy of self-reliance:<sup>130</sup>

"Our country has become a republic...

Our hope and struggle continues in order to find happiness and bring stability.

"Therefore, the educational organizations of the Khmer Republic must change in accordance with democratic ideas also. We study just to get a diploma and forget the future welfare of the community. That is not the objective of literature. Where is the objective of literature heading?

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<sup>128</sup> In 1970, General Lon Nol took power from Prince Norodom Sihanouk's *Sangkum* government in a bloodless coup when the Prince was out of the country.

<sup>129</sup> Kong Somphea, *Study of Khmer Literature*, Botumthera Som, Tum Teav, 1971:dedication page.

<sup>130</sup> The implication here is that the former *Sangkum* government of Prince Norodom Sihanouk perpetuated the feudal mentality of dependence and superficial status symbols.

"The study of literature makes us become one body so we don't let other people walk all over us unjustly. This means that it gives responsibility for the society to intellectuals and stops making delinquent criminals the masters of our lives and country. Because we are already our own master. 'You should depend on yourself' until you find happiness. Whereas depending on someone else will never lead to true happiness..."<sup>131</sup>

In this highly charged political context, the study of literature and the life of writers, in this case Venerable Botumthera Som, is part of the struggle to defend Cambodian culture from the enemy. To this end, Kong Somphea's analysis of *Tum Teav* begins with an extensive account of the life of Venerable Botumthera Som that includes the background of his accomplishments as a writer and his achievements as the Abbot of Wat Kamprau. He states his intentions thus:

"My intention for this book is to let students know about the writer Venerable Botumthera Som, to know his works of literature and his method of composition. I don't want to deliver any grandiose ideas. Please remember that 'the study of the life of a writer is valuable' because our hearts are always searching for him whenever we are reading a meaningful text.

"May our battle be successful against our enemy the Yuon Viet Cong that is invading our homeland, as well as the hordes of criminals stealing our country and destroying it right now. Let us take the hands of our brothers and sisters and join our blood to know the light of happiness like other civilized countries."<sup>132</sup>

Indeed, Kong Somphea endows Venerable Botumthera Som with all the virtues befitting a national and cultural hero. He describes Venerable

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<sup>131</sup> Kong Somphea, 1971:introduction.

<sup>132</sup> Kong Somphea, 1971:introduction.



Botumthera Som as a monk who greatly loved and respected Buddhism. When he was finished with his daily studies for example, he would help maintain and improve the temple. He guided the laity to build a monastery, and he cared for the temple grounds "like a mother caring for her children."<sup>133</sup>

Kong Somphea certainly champions the virtues of Venerable Botumthera Som, not only as a monk and writer but a patriot as well who manifested the knowledge, character and courage of one who protects and perpetuates Cambodian culture. Regarding the controversy over the authorship of *Tum Teav* and the threat it poses to Venerable Botumthera Som's reputation, Kong Somphea is unequivocal in his position that Venerable Botumthera Som is the sole and legitimate author of *Tum Teav* and that students of the text should regard him as such. According to Kong Somphea, Venerable Botumthera Som based his composition exclusively on oral versions of the story.

"Regarding *Tum Teav*, Venerable Som wrote the story from hearing a female singer and *chapi* player named Sai Pour. She would travel around singing throughout Srok Sithor Kandal and many other provinces... Therefore, the *Tum Teav* that we currently study isn't a story that someone created. It's a folk story. The story actually took place in Cambodian society. The writer only put it into verse, no different than writers of historical novels or what a patriot would do. There was no [previous] document, only peasants who passed on the story up to now as Venerable explains in his introduction:

'This is the telling of a story composed  
In an entertaining verse form.

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<sup>133</sup> Kong Somphea, 1971:22.

Ever since former times, the story has been  
Told, and over the years sentences have been  
lost.

It is inexact, uneven, and unclear, and  
sentences are missing.

Striving to check and double check the meter  
of the discourse

We corrected it to be new so that the world  
Could preserve it and continue to pass it  
on... ”<sup>134</sup>

He concludes his discussion of the text's authorship by saying that the accusations that Venerable Botumthera Som stole the story from Sandhor Mok is a regrettable error for which there is no evidence:

“It is not as some people claim that Venerable Som stole the story from the writer Sandhor Mok. Actually, there isn't a single person who has seen the text [of *Tum Teav*] by Sandhor Mok that Venerable Som supposedly stole and filled-in as he needed.

“Regarding this issue, we regret tremendously such a misunderstanding.

“The reason we explain this is because we hope that all students will believe clearly that *Tum Teav* is truly a work by Venerable Som.”<sup>135</sup>

### Ministry of Education (1989)

In 1989, the Cambodian Ministry of Education published a study on *Tum Teav*. By this time, the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh had held power for ten years, despite an international embargo and an

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<sup>134</sup> Kong Somphea, 1971:16.

<sup>135</sup> Kong Somphea, 1971:18-19.

ongoing civil war against the Khmer Rouge that was loosely allied with Royalist and Nationalist forces supported by the West. However, with the demise of the Soviet Union and the inability of the Vietnamese to provide material support for Cambodia, the government of Hun Sen had begun to revise its political strategy and enter into United Nations-sponsored negotiations with its enemies.<sup>136</sup>

The introduction of the text on *Tum Teav* presents the government's new political line that diverged from the strictly Marxist-Leninist policies of its original Soviet sponsors. The government's new policy showed greater acceptance of things from Cambodia's past, including literature, and greater independence from Soviet political philosophy.

"For a while now, we have mistakenly thought that under the socialist government we don't have to study classical stories. Or, if we study classical stories, we have to revise and infuse them with Marxist-Leninist theory. This misunderstanding has caused our studies to lose its scientific approach and the stories to lose their integrity and original value.

"Revising society doesn't mean disowning everything from the past. We only revise the things that are outdated. Whereas the good things, we support so they may flourish again."<sup>137</sup>

The introduction explains that the authors closely analyzed previous critical texts on Cambodia literature in order to use what is valuable and discard what is not so that "the current society does not repeat the same

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<sup>136</sup> In May 1993, U.N.-sponsored elections were held in Cambodia. It was the most expensive election process conducted by the U.N. to date.

<sup>137</sup> Ministry of Education, *Commentary on Tum Teav*, 1989:7.

mistakes as the past.” With the Ministry of Education under Norodom Sihanouk’s *Sangkum* government, we saw an attempt by the government to define Cambodian culture in order to assert its national identity following independence. Here, the government sees its role quite differently. In the aftermath of the genocide and the devastating legacy of Khmer Rouge’s failed revolution, the Hun Sen government presented itself as the savior of Cambodia society and the only one capable of correctly implementing socialist values. Unlike the past, the current Ministry of Education would refer to all of the versions of *Tum Teav* because “by doing this we can find and evaluate the understanding of the authors regarding society.”

In these circumstances, it was not as important to determine who is the legitimate author of *Tum Teav*. This is quite different from the period following independence when the study of literature was part of the attempt to define and safeguard Cambodian cultural identity. Under those circumstances, establishing the legitimate author of the story was critical. Here however, the purported objective of literary criticism is to learn from the past in order to correct the mistakes of former regimes and define the true path to socialism. In the process of doing this, all texts are useful.

“Today, besides the work of Venerable Som, we also have *Tum Teav* by Sandhor Mok. Regarding this work, there may be some comrades who ask, ‘Can they compare the work of Venerable Som with someone else’s work when they don’t know for sure the author? Because they don’t know yet if the other text of *Tum Teav* is really the work of Sandhor Mok.’

"The comrade students already know that the important task is to compare. If we can't compare [Venerable Som's text] with Sandhor Mok's text, then we can compare it with the work of Writer X. Because nevertheless, the other work does exist."<sup>138</sup>

The authors of the Ministry's critical text go on to explain that the issue of a lack of an identifiable author is true for many works in Cambodian literature. The Ministry also points to the same problem with other literatures. They say for example that the same problem exists in Greek literature with the case of Homer and the *Odyssey* and in English literature with some works attributed to Shakespeare. However, in each case, an author was attributed to the work because "they couldn't find evidence that it wasn't or they found there were other similar works as the one in question by that author."<sup>139</sup>

They suggest a number of reasons why the authors of Cambodian classical texts did not sign their names to their work. Many writers, they explain, did not want to reveal their identity because they wanted to "safeguard their happiness." Others did not identify themselves out of modesty or because the text was their first work. On the other hand, they explain, many writers did inscribe their names on the palm leaf manuscripts so there would not be any confusion among future readers regarding the identity of the author. Finally, many writers inscribed their names so that future writers upon seeing the name of the author would not plagiarize

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<sup>138</sup> Ministry of Education, 1989:8-9.

<sup>139</sup> Ministry of Education, 1989:10.

their text. They conclude that the fact that there is no clear name of the author on the manuscript doesn't mean that Sandhor Mok could not have written it:

"We don't know clearly to which group Sandhor Mok belonged. However, regarding the existence of *Tum Teav* by Sandhor Mok, a large number of Khmer students need not give up just because he did not clearly inscribe 'written by Sandhor Mok' as with the version by Venerable Som."<sup>140</sup>

While the authors of the Ministry of Education's 1989 critical text on *Tum Teav* make an effort to justify their decision to attribute the authorship of the other text to Sandhor Mok, at its basis their argument is very different from the others discussed in this section. They are not concerned with identifying the original author of *Tum Teav* as with some of the literary critics from the 1960s. In addition, the political context is very different. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the literary criticism concerning the controversy of the author reflects the nationalism inspired by independence. In this case, there is a political agenda and propaganda according to which the issue of the text's authorship is secondary to the primary concern of using the study of literature to learn about and "correct the mistakes of the past."

### **Major Themes**

In this section, various viewpoints on the characters and events in *Tum Teav* are presented. We are particularly interested in opinions regarding traditional codes of conduct and relations of power in Cambodian society.

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<sup>140</sup> Ministry of Education, 1989:9-10.

Our understanding of traditional codes of conduct for both Tum and Teav is based on certain assumptions. Being a novice monk, we assume that Tum received moral instruction at the temple where his daily activities would have been governed by Buddhist precepts and doctrine. For Teav, our assumption is that she received instruction at home from her mother with the help of Noe based on among other things the body of texts called the *cpap* or "Codes of Conduct," a genre of Cambodian didactic poetry concerned with issues of right and wrong and proper conduct.

The theme of abuse of power is most relevant with regard to Teav's mother, who, in order to marry her daughter to the rich Governor's son, is willing to use any means possible. The most powerful weapon at her disposal is the assumed authority of the parent over the child, along with the expectation that the child will comply without question with the parent's decision. This traditional relationship comes into play most directly in the story with regard to the custom of arranged marriage.

The viewpoints of literary critics on these themes range from the strongly nationalist opinions of Kim Sam Or, a former official at the periodical *Sammaki*, to the Western-influenced theories of Vandy Kaonn that attempt to trace the source of Cambodia's sociological problems prior to the Khmer Rouge take over of Phnom Penh in 1975. Finally, we will supplement our discussion of literary criticism on *Tum Teav* with examples from Cambodian literature, such as the folk stories of *Judge Rabbit* and *Thmenh Chey*.

### Kim Set (1959)

In 1959, *The Knowledge of Khmer Writers* by Kim Set was published.<sup>141</sup>

Kim Set's assessment of the characters and events in *Tum Teav* reflect the confusion and difficulty of defining Cambodian cultural identity after independence, when the attempt to modernize and transform Cambodian society pulled the country in opposing directions. On the one hand, there was the desire to adopt modern technology and methods that would enable Cambodia to take its place beside the newly developed countries of Southeast Asia, such as Thailand and Indonesia. On the other hand, there was the attempt to rediscover and validate the traditional culture that was devalued during a century of French cultural domination. This confusion can be seen in Kim Set's analysis of the characters in *Tum Teav* and the way he attempts to recast traditional codes of conduct as "modern."

Kim Set's text was written as a study guide for lycée students and follows the typical format of question and answer. The majority of study questions in *The Knowledge of Khmer Writers* concern the characters and events from the novel *phka srapon* [Wilted Flower] by Nu Hach, while the end of

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<sup>141</sup> According to Khing Hok Dy, Kim Set was born around 1930 in Cochinchina and presumably died in 1975 at the outset of the genocide. He taught Khmer in a private school in Phnom Penh, but his position was unstable and poorly paid. He wrote many novels and scholarly texts in order to live in the capital city. Khing Hok Dy lists twenty-two novels by Kim Set beginning with his 1951 novel *The Shadow of the Thief* and four scholarly texts not including *The Knowledge of Khmer Writers* (Khing Hok Dy, 1993:88-89).



the text deals briefly with the classical text *Sophasit*.<sup>142</sup> One of the study questions asks the student to make a comparison of Tum from *Tum Teav* and Bun Thoeun, the main male character from *Wilted Flower*.<sup>143</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are many similarities between the plots of *Tum Teav* and *Wilted Flower*. Briefly, in *Wilted Flower* the parents of Witheavy, a young woman, and Bun Thoeun, a student at Lycée Sisowath, arrange for them to be married when they are children. However, when Bun Thoeun's father becomes poor, Witheavy's mother (her father has since died) breaks off the engagement and arranges for Witheavy to marry Ny Sot, the son of a rich merchant. Although Witheavy does not accept the new arrangement and remains true to Bun Thoeun, she does not voice her opposition to her mother. Instead, she maintains the traditional role of the dutifully silent daughter. When Bun Thoeun receives a letter from Witheavy explaining the situation and assuring him of her steadfast devotion, he replies telling her that she should forget about him because he is poor and marry Ny Sot who has the means to make her happy. Nevertheless, Witheavy remains committed to Bun Thoeun. She subsequently becomes sick from depression and dies from heartbreak just prior to her marriage to Ny Sot.

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<sup>142</sup> *Phka srapon* was first published in serial form in 1947 in *Kambuja*. It was later published in book form in 1949.

<sup>143</sup> Since Kim Set's text predates the publications of the 1960 version of the story by Sandhor Mok and the 1962 version by Venerable Botumthera Som, it is not clear which version of *Tum Teav* he is referring to in his text.

The study question from Kim Set's text reads:

"Compare the personality of Bun Thoeun, the character in *Wilted Flower*, with the personality of Tum, the character in *Tum Teav*, regarding the issue of love."<sup>144</sup>

In response to the question, Kim Set explains that both texts provide insights into the life of Cambodian people during different times, *Tum Teav* during the Lovek period, and *Wilted Flower* during modern times. Comparing Tum and Bun Thoeun, Kim Set states that, "Bun Thoeun has a better character than Tum regarding the issue of love. He has an admirable and progressive attitude." Kim Set attributes Bun Thoeun's model behavior to the modern times in which he lives and concludes his remarks on this question saying:

"Bun Thoeun has a better character than Tum because Bun Thoeun was born and grew up in modern times, a scientific age, a time of advancement!"

I find it difficult however to understand the logic that leads Kim Set to conclude that the characters of Bun Thoeun and Tum reflect the time periods in which they live. Kim Set rightly observes that it is to Bun Thoeun's credit that he is so concerned for Witheavy's reputation and future happiness. However, it is not clear why Bun Thoeun feels that she would be happier with Ny Sot, a man she despises, than with him. Bun Thoeun bases his decision not to pursue Witheavy on traditional values regarding reputation and social status that are not in her best interests. Although Ny Sot is wealthy, he is a womanizer and abhorred by Witheavy.

<sup>144</sup> The Knowledge of Khmer Writers, Kim Set, 1959:30.

She tells Bun Thoeun as much in her letter. So why doesn't Bun Thoeun act on his feelings and attempt to win Witheavy back instead of passively acquiesce? Wouldn't this be the more modern response?

On the other hand, Kim Set understandably finds fault with Tum's behavior. Tum is rash and impetuous and compromises Teav's reputation because he is unable to control his emotions. The fact that Tum is a monk makes him all the more accountable for his misdeeds. As foolish as Tum may be, his actions are nonetheless extraordinary given the time period in which he lives. Unlike modern times, during the Lovek period it was unheard of for anyone to challenge the power of someone in Governor Ah Chun's position.<sup>145</sup>

Kim Set's 1959 analysis however reflects a very different perspective. Accordingly, Bun Thoeun is "good" because, rather than challenge the authority of Witheavy's mother, he submissively accepts her decision that she would be happier with a rich husband than a poor one. He suppresses his feelings and advises Witheavy to do the same, despite the greater freedom supposedly afforded them by living in modern times. For Kim Set, Bun Thoeun's respect for parental authority exemplifies what "modern" Cambodia should be, while Tum's rejection of traditional codes of conduct epitomizes the failure of meeting those expectations. By recasting traditional codes of conduct as "modern," Kim Set's assessment

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<sup>145</sup> Indeed, as we shall see in Chapter 4, many contemporary readers have made Tum a heroic symbol for the modern struggle against those who abuse their power and authority.

reflects the general confusion and difficulty of defining modern Cambodian cultural identity after independence.

### Kim Sam Or (1961)

Kim Sam Or was an official at *Sammaki* [Solidarity], a nationalistic periodical that opposed Norodom Sihanouk.<sup>146</sup> In 1961, he published *The History of Cambodian Literature*, a compilation of material from *Sammaki*. In keeping with the strong nationalistic tenor of the periodical, he states in his introduction that *The History of Cambodian Literature* was produced to aid Cambodians in the study of their own national literature after one hundred years "under the iron yoke of the imperialistic colonialists."

The nationalistic enthusiasm for freedom and opposition to abuse of power can be clearly seen in Kim Sam Or's interpretation of the characters and events in the story. In his discussion of Yay Phan, he criticizes the authority that parents had over their children in arranging their marriage during the Lovek period. For example, when Teav tries unsuccessfully to express her refusal to marry Murn Guon, her mother asserts her authority over her:

388.

a. The mother waited to hear Teav have her say, then responded,

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<sup>146</sup> In 1955, *Sammaki*, edited by Saloth Chhay, the brother of Saloth Sar a.k.a. Pol Pot, was banned by Sihanouk because they had dated Cambodian independence from 1954, the date of the Geneva Conference, instead of 1953, the date associated with Sihanouk (see David Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History*, Yale University Press, 1991:77).

- b. "Oh, Teav! You should calm down
- c. "And control your emotions. You are not looking ahead.
- d. "Calm down first. Don't argue me into a corner."

389.

- a. "Be careful you don't destroy everything with your recklessness.
- b. "A chicken's egg will come to have worries
- c. "As it rolls straight for a stone and breaks into a million pieces.'
- d. "If you persist in cornering me, you will push me over the edge!

390.

- a. "In our tradition you are like
- b. "The child who doesn't listen and is obstinate.
- c. "You are a perfect example
- d. "Of those who are stubborn and become outcasts.

391.

- a. "It never ever happens. Teav, that the cake
- b. "Can be bigger than its mold.
- c. "The baby water buffalo that refuses to follow its mother through the jungle
- d. "When it is on fire will meet its death."

Kim Sam Or concludes:

"Yay Phan uses her power to gain wealth. She coerces her daughter as expressed by the saying, 'the cake is never bigger than the mold.' This custom made some girls take men they did not love to be their husbands. Some of the girls who didn't agree to the arrangement would run away or kill themselves. The story of Teav is proof of this."<sup>147</sup>

Once again, we find the reference to the saying "the cake is never bigger than the mold" that has come to define the prerogative parents assume over their children in Cambodian society. Other expressions used in *Tum Teav*,

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<sup>147</sup> Kim Sam Or, 1961:43.

such as "Don't try to hug a mountain with short arms" or "A chicken egg cannot become a rock," pertain to similar relations of power between the classes. For Kim Sam Or, the character of Ah Chun epitomizes the abuse of power by government officials who rule with impunity:

"The conduct of Ah Chun shows how officials during that time were vicious and had power like one of the King's ministers. He seized and beat the people. He separated Teav from Tum."<sup>148</sup>

Kim Sam Or has the same objection to the absolute power enjoyed by the King in dispensing justice. At the conclusion of the story, the King gathers his ministers and instructs them to deliberate on the case and determine the proper punishment. In the King's mind, Ah Chun has committed the worst crime possible by challenging his authority. He instructs his ministers to deliver the most serious punishment possible and orders them to have no pity for Ah Chhun:

992.

- a. The King said, "All advisers,
- b. "Confer and pronounce judgment according to your function.
- c. "Whoever is guilty will be shackled and chained.
- d. "He must be put in a dark prison to think about his crime.

993.

- a. "Don't have mercy! Have the women and men of Tbong Kmom
- b. "Go forth to chop and drag
- c. "Bamboo and wood. Have them cut, shovel and sweep the area
- d. "Bare. Have them clean it up completely!

994.

- a. "The area will be used to dig a pit.

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<sup>148</sup> Kim Sam Or, 1961:43.

- b. "A large hole. Then take a wide, long container
- c. "And pound it into crossed lines bent backwards
- d. "So it conforms to the shape of the pit."

995.

- a. The chief ministers listened to the King tell them
- b. Angrily and loudly not to be too long in their deliberations.
- c. The military commanders responded,
- d. But the King could not relax or control his torment.

Kim Sam Or concludes:

"The way of judging cases is another example. There was no law greater than King Reamea's own judgment, as in the way he sentenced the family of Ah Chun and reduced the people to being hereditary slaves."<sup>149</sup>

Given the political position of *Sammaki*, it is not unreasonable to read the political criticism directed at Norodom Sihanouk in Kim Sam Or's negative depiction of King Reamea. Indeed, Kim Sam Or's critical text is a clear example of the use of literature in general and *Tum Teav* in particular for voicing political viewpoints after independence.

Criticism of abuse of power has a long history in Cambodian literature. One example worth mentioning here is the folk story *Thmenh Chey*.<sup>150</sup> In

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<sup>149</sup> Kim Sam Or, 1961:44.

<sup>150</sup> Like *Judge Rabbit*, *Thmenh Chey* is one of the most popular stories in Cambodian folk literature. The story's importance is shown by the fact that it was one of the first folk stories published by the Buddhist Institute. In addition, French scholars interested in documenting Cambodian history and culture recorded and translated the story.

Étienne Aymonier (1844-1929) is exemplary of the early French scholars who undertook the difficult task of studying and interpreting Cambodian culture. Most notable for our

purposes here is his 1878 lithograph of Cambodian folk stories *Textes Khmers*. It was the first publication of Cambodian folk stories and it included among others *Judge Rabbit* and *Thmenh Chey*. Aymonier also had a profound influence on some of the Cambodian intellectuals who were beginning to conceptualize Cambodian national identity vis-à-vis the west. Among them was Son Diep, a ranking functionary in the colonial service who prepared Aymonier's lithographed book of Cambodian folk stories for publication. In 1900, Son Diep attended the World Exposition in France and recorded his observations in his *Voyage en France pendant l'exposition universelle de 1900 à Paris*, published by Plon-Nourrit in 1902. In 1906, he accompanied King Sisowath and the royal dance troupe to France to perform at the International Colonial Exposition. This was a particularly important event because it was the first time that Cambodian classical dance was performed in the West.

Another French scholar who exerted a strong influence on young Cambodian intellectuals was Auguste Pavie. Like Aymonier, Pavie was a prodigious writer who produced much of the groundbreaking work on Cambodian language and ethnography for the French. In 1881, his *Excursions dans le Cambodge et le royaume de Siam* was published. In 1898, he published his *Recherches sur la littérature du Cambodge, du Laos, et du Siam*. In 1885, Pavie founded the École Cambodgienne in Paris that was attended by promising young Cambodian students who later rose through the ranks of the colonial administration.

Like Aymonier, Pavie took a special interest in Cambodian folk stories, and in 1921 he published *Contes du Cambodge*, a collection of stories translated into French by Thiounn Sambath, a protégé of Pavie. Thiounn rose through the colonial administration and was the minister of the royal Palace between 1902 and 1941. During that time he also wrote French language pamphlets that described Cambodian traditions and culture. He also contributed to Khmer language journals that helped to establish a literary forum for articulating ideas about Cambodian national and cultural identity. Along with Son Diep, he was involved with the unprecedented trip of the royal ballet to France to perform at the 1906 International Colonial Exposition at Marseille.

Along with classic texts such as *Reamkei*, *Gatiloke* and *Mahabharata*, folkstories from Cambodia and elsewhere were a regular feature in the monthly issues of *Kambujasuriya*. (In 1957, 1958 and 1959 Japanese folk stories were published in successive editions. In 1963 and 1964, the French fables of La Fontaine appear along with various Chinese folk stories.) All of these folk stories were researched and edited by Dik Keam. Ly Theam Teng, another Cambodian literary scholar, contributed some Khmer folk stories with introductions. In 1932, for example, some of the folk stories previously collected by Aymonier began to appear. *The Story of the Tiger* was published in the first issue of that year. It was followed in subsequent issues by other stories from Aymonier's collection. In



the story, the young rascal Thmenh Chey uses trickery and deceit to outwit and exact revenge on a *setthei* (a rich merchant) who initially tricks Thmenh Chey into taking a lesser amount of rice as a reward for returning the *setthei*'s wife's shuttle that had fallen. Although we might feel that Thmenh Chey is being a nuisance and deserves to be reprimanded for insisting on more rice than he deserves, the *setthei* is also at fault for taking advantage of the young Thmenh Chey. As his patron, it is up to the rich and powerful *setthei* to demonstrate his capacity and willingness to protect the poor Thmenh Chey. Instead, he loses the trust of Thmenh Chey and instigates his quest for revenge.

Thmenh Chey's revenge against the *setthei* can be interpreted as an attack against the merchant class of Cambodian feudal society. In his relations with the *setthei*, Thmenh Chey makes a mockery of the show of respect and loyalty that is expected of the peasant toward his feudal master. (Thmenh Chey is in fact the slave of the *setthei*.) When the *setthei* orders him to do something, Thmenh Chey paradoxically opposes him by obeying him to the letter. In fact, it is the literal use of language that is Thmenh Chey's most effective weapon against the *setthei*'s political power over him.

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1935, other Cambodian folk stories appeared, and in 1938 *Judge Rabbit* and *Thmenh Chey* were serialized. However, it was not until the 1960s, following Cambodian independence, that the various Cambodian folk stories published by *Kambujasuriya* were collected and published as a collection in Khmer.

While the *setthei* could easily destroy Thmenh Chey if he chooses, he wants to be seen as a good patron by the other mandarins. He goes to great lengths to impress them and demonstrate his worthiness. It would be seen as wrong if he were to beat Thmenh Chey without justification. The clients of the other patrons would see this as an injustice and a betrayal of the patrons as a class. The *setthei* does not want this to happen, so he must act within the rules. He cannot punish his client for doing what he was told. He can justifiably punish Thmenh Chey only if he has disobeyed him.

This strategy completely disarms the *setthei* who cannot fault Thmenh Chey or legitimately punish him on the grounds that he has been disobedient. Of course, both Thmenh Chey and the *setthei* are fully aware of the charade that is being played. However, Thmenh Chey has cleverly used the rules to his advantage. He has used his place as the subordinate in their hierarchical relationship to his advantage and there is nothing that the *setthei* can do other than pass on his problem to the King as a "gift."

Popular Cambodian folkstories like *Thmenh Chey*, while full of humor, also convey important messages of survival and social justice. *Thmenh Chey* is full of social satire and criticism of Cambodia's hierarchical society. By outwitting his rich master without ever directly confronting him, the character Thmenh Chey champions the cause of the powerless against the privileged class. Despite his tragic death, Tum is often seen as a folk hero for similar reasons.

### Leang Hap An (1962)

After the conclusion of Leang Hap An's 1962 critical text on *Tum Teav*, there is a final section that poses fifty study questions, some of which were taken from previous baccalauréat exams on Cambodian literature.<sup>151</sup> The basis for the answers to the questions are found in the central section of Leang Hap An's text where he discusses the story's meaning. The central section is organized into three parts that correspond to the three parts of the story identified in the previous section of his analysis. The three parts are:

Tum and Teav marry secretly

Tum and Teav are separated then reunited at the Palace

Tum and Teav separate in death

For each of the three parts, Leang Hap An poses various questions and suggests answers.<sup>152</sup> Given that Leang Hap An's text was intended as a study guide for lycée students, it provides an interesting insight into the prevailing viewpoints on some of the major themes in the story identified above, namely Buddhist morality, traditional codes of conduct and relations of power.

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<sup>151</sup> It appears that the Khmer Writers Association added these questions to the text.

<sup>152</sup> This method of question and answer is typical of Cambodian instructional texts. The format is very organized and logical with the answers further broken down into smaller sections. This method of instruction closely resembles the format of Buddhist texts where disciples pose questions to the Buddha whose answers are organized into lists that follow a clear logic.

For example, the first study question is: "If you were a monk, should you behave like Tum? Why? Explain." The answer to the question is found in Leang Hap An's discussion of the meaning of the first part of the story, i.e., Tum and Teav secretly marry, where he asks, "In what ways is Tum's behavior in this part of the story right and in what ways is it wrong?"<sup>153</sup>

Leang Hap An provides the student with various ideas that address this question on the one hand in terms of Tum's role and responsibilities as a monk, and on the other in terms of his blind resolve to disrobe in order to pursue his love for Teav. From the story, we know that Tum's mother (presumably Tum has no father) brought him to the Buddhist temple to be ordained as a novice monk under the supervision of the Abbot of the temple.<sup>154</sup> As part of the ordination ceremony, Tum would have been required to comply with the rules regarding the receiving and returning of his monk's robes and begging bowl to the Abbot.<sup>155</sup> Later in the story, when Tum refuses to obey the Abbot's instructions to wait until the end of

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<sup>153</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:19.

<sup>154</sup> Until the introduction of western-style education at the end of the 19th century, Cambodian boys would typically become ordained as novice monks and receive formal instruction at a local temple. In Theravadan Buddhism, there is no minimum amount of time a male must remain a monk, and it is common for young boys to enter the monkhood for a single rainy season. According to popular belief, the act of "giving away" one's son to the Buddhist *sangha*, is one of the most important ways for parents to earn merit and thereby enhance their prospects for a favorable rebirth. Likewise, entering the monkhood is an important way for the son to show respect and gratitude for his parents.

<sup>155</sup> As a novice monk, Tum would have been taught to read and write by older monks and given instruction in Buddhist morality, self-discipline and philosophy. His daily activities from begging for rice to eat to the wearing of his saffron robes would have been governed by strict rules of conduct enforced by the temple Abbot.

the year before disrobing, he undermines the Abbot's authority and sanctity of the Buddhist doctrine. Moreover, rather than earning merit for his mother, Tum does quite the opposite.

Leang Hap An does not condemn Tum for his actions, nor does he excuse them. Using excerpts from Venerable Botumthera Som's text, he describes Tum as a handsome and talented man whose emotions are in conflict with the rules of the monkhood. His desire to experience life outside the temple overpowers him and blinds him to the inevitable consequences of his actions. For example, recall that at the beginning of the story, Tum returns to the temple after falling in love with Teav in Tbong Kmom. He is determined to disrobe and return to Tbong Kmom and be with Teav. However, the Abbot is not fooled by Tum's false stories and is fully aware of what has happened and Tum's motives for wanting to disrobe. When the Abbot insists that he wait until the end of the year before he disrobes, Tum goes to his mother and asks for her help. He lies to her as well saying he is very sick and that she must convince the Abbot to change his mind and allow him to disrobe. Tum's mother, unaware of the truth, presents Tum's request to the Abbot who informs her of the real reason for Tum's "sickness" and explains in no uncertain terms that Tum must not disrobe:

230.

- a. The Abbot, not long afterwards, spoke.
- b. "No, the young novice Tum
- c. "Went away to sell *taok*. After selling all of them,
- d. "He returned love sick over a girl.

232.

- a. "We must not allow Tum to disrobe.

- b. "I've calculated the numbers and seen that he would be met by death."<sup>156</sup>
- c. "Tum's fortune is full of bad luck."
- d. "He must be prevented from disrobing until the end of this year."

When Tum's mother speaks with Tum after her meeting with the Abbot, she warns him not to challenge the Abbot's authority.<sup>157</sup> Using motherly advice, she tries to convince Tum to return to his studies. Despite his mother's warnings and advice, Tum cannot be dissuaded and decides to disrobe without permission, thereby committing a most serious offense against the rules of conduct. Rather than controlling his emotions, Tum is controlled by them and repeatedly lies to the Abbot and his mother in order to pursue his desires. Tum does not fulfill the customary role expected of Buddhist monks, and the narrator foretells of the misfortune that awaits him for the transgressions he has committed:

243.

- a. Tum decided to get away from the temple straight away.
- b. Distraught he ripped his kroma and pinned the end fashioning a pocket.
- c. Then he grabbed his monk's clothes, folded them and inserted them into the pocket.
- d. He carried the bundle on his hip and walked to the forest.

244.

- a. He asked the forest spirits to hide and shelter him. He took out

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<sup>156</sup> The Abbot has made calculations using astrological charts used for making predictions about the future.

<sup>157</sup> There is a political dimension to Tum's opposition to the Abbot who refuses him permission to disrobe. In Stanza 234 Tum's mother compares the Abbot to the French, saying: "Dear child, don't argue./ "How can you oppose the Abbot? It would be comparable to a war./ "He is like the French when they show off their guns."

- b. Flowers, votive candles, incense and food
- c. To offer the spirits. Then Tum
- d. Raised his hands to pray.

246.

- a. Tum prayed to the spirits not to hinder him,
- b. Then he changed out of the last of his monk's clothes
- c. And put on a fine, clean silk sarong.
- d. He lifted all of his monk's garments and hung them from a branch.

247.

- a. The forked branch sagged close to the ground.
- b. The young monk had dared to perform
- c. His own disrobing and continue on his way.
- d. Yet, his conduct, sneaky and improper was not finished with him.

Regarding whether Tum can control his actions or if he is controlled by his Karma, Leang Hap An states:

"Tum's secret disrobing is truly wrong. Wrong according to civil laws as well as Buddhist precepts. But if we speak in terms of sentiment, it's not so unusual, because want to or not, or whether he had ten mothers and ten Abbots trying to stop him, he is determined to disrobe, and there is nothing that can stop him or make him understand that it is wrong."<sup>158</sup>

The conflict between human emotions and the Buddhist Doctrine that teaches self-discipline and the cessation of desire is a primary source of the story's compelling pathos.<sup>159</sup> In this regard, I would argue that Tum is comparable to Judge Rabbit, the popular character from Cambodian

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<sup>158</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:22.

<sup>159</sup> Buddhist philosophy is based on the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. Through meditation and the practice of mindfulness, one learns to understand the nature of suffering and the path leading to Enlightenment.

folklore, in terms of the cunning tactics they each use to survive despite the moral transgressions they commit in the process. In the folk story, Judge Rabbit will feign death (as in the first episode to get the old woman's bananas) or falsely claim special knowledge (as in the episodes with the alligator and the toad) in order to obtain food and water. Like Tum however he is never able to take control of his life. Although he is able to temporarily evade his present difficulties, each episode only leads to further hardships. For example, although Judge Rabbit is able to outwit the old woman in order to steal her bananas, the snails subsequently outsmart him when he tries to drink the water from their pond. Throughout the story, Judge Rabbit is a tragic anti-hero whose cunning enables him to escape one disaster only to get into some new trouble.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Judge Rabbit's behavior would normally be condemned. Yet, his wrong actions are excused because they are necessary for his survival. Consider the episode where Judge Rabbit steals cucumbers from the old man's farm. After doing this repeatedly, he becomes caught in the trap the old man has set for him. To get free from the trap Judge Rabbit makes the same false promises to the toad that he made to the alligator when he wanted to cross the river. When the toad finally helps him, Judge Rabbit ridicules the toad saying his *slain*g is not curable. This time however Judge Rabbit immediately pays for his arrogance and gets caught in the trap again after he succumbs to his desire to eat more cucumbers.

What enables him to escape the trap and survive is his cunning. When the toad finds Judge Rabbit caught in the farmer's trap a second time, he is happy to see him paying a price for tricking him previously. But Judge Rabbit is able to dupe the toad again by playing to its desire for girls. Judge Rabbit is certainly not a good Buddhist, but he is clever. Because of his cunning, we are willing to forgive Judge Rabbit's wrongdoing. At the end of the day, what makes Judge Rabbit a heroic figure is his successful struggle to survive despite his flaws.

In the final episode of the folk story, Judge Rabbit gets caught a second time in yet another farmer's trap after he cannot resist his desire to eat his field of tasty green seedlings bare. Although he was able to escape the first time by pretending to be dead,



In many ways Tum and Judge Rabbit are cut from the same cloth. Despite his personal failings, Tum's struggle to be with Teav whatever the cost has earned him a special place in the hearts of Cambodian readers. For this reason Tum is a source of inspiration to people like Mr Pech Tum Kravel, one of Cambodia's most prominent dramatists. It is Tum's steadfast devotion for Teav and his willingness to oppose anyone, including the powerful temple Abbot and provincial Governor, to be with her that makes Tum such an endearing character. However, like Judge Rabbit, Tum's efforts come up short. While Judge Rabbit's fatal flaw may be his arrogance, with Tum his excessive desire and immaturity entrap him in a cycle of suffering. Tum is able to defy the Abbot and rejoin Teav, but their reunion is short lived. New difficulties soon arise that force their separation and culminate with their deaths.<sup>161</sup>

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Judge Rabbit repeats the same error and is caught again. This time, the farmer is weary of Judge Rabbit's tricks and places him in a fish trap near his house to make sure he does not escape. But the next day when the farmer catches a fish a places it in a jar beside Judge Rabbit, the scene is set for Judge Rabbit to demonstrate his clever survival skills. He instructs the fish to play dead knowing the farmer will try to revive him by placing him in the river to keep him fresh to eat later. But the fish immediately swims away causing the farmer to panic. He calls his wife to grab the fish trap quickly so he can catch the fish. When she does so, she inadvertently releases Judge Rabbit who runs away. And in the confusion, the fish plunges into the water and escapes as well. Not only does Judge Rabbit save himself and the fish, he also proves the Buddhist monk right who earlier predicted to the farmer's disbelief that he would have nothing to eat that morning.

<sup>161</sup> The theme of separation and reunion is another major motif of Cambodian literature. We find it in the modern novels, as well as in classic texts such as the *Reamkei* with Rama and his wife Sitha.

Although Tum's persistent pursuit of Teav may be admirable, Leang Hap An's last word on the issue is that Tum must take final responsibility for his actions. Accordingly, he takes Tum to task for his inability to control his emotions that he knows will lead to his and Teav's demise:

"The feelings that leads Tum to say, 'She depends on me. How I miss her!'<sup>162</sup> show Tum's emotional weakness that cause the love for a girl to change him, a monk, into a layman and a slave of love. Tum is a person with knowledge, full of ability, a bright young man, but when he falls in love, he becomes miserable. Can we say he is strong and brave emotionally or that he is the master of his feelings?"<sup>163</sup>

Leang Hap An continues his analysis of the conflict between desire and traditional codes of conduct in the section entitled "The Force of Tum's and Teav's Love."<sup>164</sup> As a novice monk and an adolescent girl "in the shade" respectively, both Tum and Teav are expected to comply with the traditional codes of conduct that govern their roles in Cambodian society.<sup>165</sup> As mentioned above, Tum would have received this instruction

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<sup>162</sup> This quote is the second line from stanza 132 of Venerable Botumthera Som's text. The complete stanza reads: "Oh *teal* tree. My body is broken./ She [Teav] depends on me. How miss her./ *Pdiek* tree, I was wrong to leave her at all. *Kau kau* tree! I can't think! There is no relief!"

<sup>163</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:31.

<sup>164</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:48.

<sup>165</sup> The expression "in the shade" refers to the period of time when a girl upon reaching puberty is confined to the home under close supervision as the parents seek out a suitable marriage partner. During this period of seclusion, the girl is taught the domestic skills necessary for fulfilling her future role as a housewife, such as cooking, needlework, etc. In addition, the girl was taught how to comport herself in a submissive and subservient way. For example, when in the presence of men, a woman was expected to avoid eye contact and avert her gaze. She should speak in a soft and gentle voice, etc. These would be the attributes of the ideal Cambodian woman referred to by the term *krup leak*,

at the Buddhist temple. Being a girl, Teav is not eligible to enter the monkhood. Instead, she would have been instructed at home by her mother with the help of Noe and would have been expected to comport herself according to the traditional codes of conduct described for example in the body of texts called the *cpap* or "Codes of Conduct," a genre of Cambodian didactic poetry concerned with issues of right and wrong and proper conduct.<sup>166</sup>

Opposed to these codes of conduct however is the force of love. Recall that when Tum and Pech return to Tbong Kmom after disrobing, Tum is eager seek out Teav. Despite Pech's warnings to be careful, Tum cannot restrain himself and goes to Teav's house alone. When Tum arrives at Teav's house, Teav's mother is not at home, and Teav has been left under

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meaning "all the marks" of virtue. Accordingly, the degree to which a woman had the marks of a virtuous woman determined her marriage prospects.

<sup>166</sup> The *cpap* have been composed continuously in Cambodia for about four hundred years, and they are considered the authoritative source of ethical advice concerning one's personal responsibilities as a member of Cambodian society. The didactic function of the *cpap* was traditionally communicated to the student through a rigid method of rote learning whereby the student repeated, memorized and recited the verses of each poem. The method of learning the *cpap* through rote memorization is made easier by the fact that they are not only written in verse according to a strict rhyme and meter. They also have a specific rhythm and melody to accompany each rhyme pattern. Thus, students studied the verse with both their eyes and ears, and equal value is given to both the audio and graphic aspects of the poems. Before the institution of the French educational system in the late 19th century, this would have been part of a boy's traditional education in the temple schools under the direction of the monks, or a girl's education at home. Although the *cpap* were incorporated into the study of literature under the French school system, the traditional temple-based system continued simultaneously, especially in rural areas. Teav would have been expected to model her behavior on the moral code described in the *cpap*. Her sexual relations with Tum is clearly in violation of these expectations.

the care of Noe.<sup>167</sup> However, Noe allows Tum and Teav to be left alone, and after a playful exchange of witticisms they consummate their love. This is a serious violation of the traditional expectation that couples do not have sex before marriage. In addition, by leaving Tum and Teav alone, Noe fails in her responsibility to serve as Teav's guardian. This is an especially important scene of the story, and one that very much resembles the balcony scene in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*:

413.

- a. Tum said, "What kind of person would be so easily fooled?
- b. "To go back and what's more allow himself to become separated
- c. "Before having his sweetheart. Don't wave me away.
- d. "Let's join together as one, not be broken apart."

414.

- a. "I am like a flower,
- b. "While you are like a bumble bee
- c. "That flies around and spotting the flower enters straight away.
- d. "Afterwards, it doesn't delay and is soon on its way again."

415.

- a. Tum said, "I am like the lion king,
- b. "While Miss Teav is like a large cave.
- c. "If the lion king has a place to live,
- d. "He will never allow himself to leave."

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<sup>167</sup> We should note that Noe has an important role to play in Teav's moral upbringing. Noe is the one responsible for attending to Teav's daily needs and most importantly safeguarding her reputation. Since it was assumed that a girl would be a virgin before getting married, Noe's most important function was to guarantee that Teav had no interaction with the opposite sex. However, Noe fails to fulfill her responsibilities, and in fact directly enables Teav's sexual relations with Tum. Noe's complicity begins before the scene described here when Tum first came to Teav's house to chant at Teav's mother's invitation. It is Noe who delivers the perfumed scarf to Tum on Teav's behalf. When Tum returns to the temple, the *pahom* scarf constantly reminds him of Teav and serves as a symbol of her love for him.

416.

- a. Teav said, "I am like a dock,
- b. "While you, so charming, are like a boat.
- c. "You are quick to park a while, precious one,
- d. "Then hurry away without a second thought."

417.

- a. Tum said, "Oh, I am like a large fish,
- b. "While you, young Teav, are like a river.
- c. "The fish that has deep water swims leisurely from side to side.
- d. "Don't, dear! Don't reject me or be suspicious."

418.

- a. Teav said, "I am like a tree,
- b. "While you are like a sarika bird that perches there every day.
- c. "You stop to perch and take shelter,
- d. "Then fly off at great speed to go to some other place."

422.

- a. Teav said, "Oh, dear sir!
- b. "Who would not be suspicious
- c. "Of the words of a man trying to show off his intelligence?
- d. "So don't tell me not to be suspicious."

423.

- a. As Teav spoke wisely,
- b. Tum had no fear at all.
- c. He grabbed Teav.
- d. "Do you still doubt me? Do you still not believe how I feel?"

424.

- a. Teav was furious that Tum should be so disrespectful
- b. As to grab her hand and caress her so brazenly.
- c. "Think of it! You should be ashamed of yourself! How could I
- d. "Admire someone who would dare to barge in here this way?"

425.

- a. "How dare you come here and kiss my cheek and even touch my breast!
- b. "Someone who is not afraid of anything does not please me!"
- c. Tum said, "I'm sorry if I was wrong! Please let me, my dear,
- d. "Love you forever and ever!"

426.

- a. Miss Noe, Teav's nanny, knowing the situation,
- b. Left quickly without a word,
- c. Afraid Teav would be embarrassed by her presence.
- d. Teav was ready to give her love to Tum.

427.

- a. Tum hugged Teav in his arms playfully.
- b. Neither of them were afraid to consummate their love.
- c. Inside a comfortable house like that,
- d. The young woman became easily aroused with passion.<sup>168</sup>

Afterwards, Teav's mother returns home completely unaware of what has just taken place and invites Tum to stay at her house, an action that adds comedy and irony to this otherwise dramatic scene. Tum accepts Teav's mother's invitation to stay at her house and continues his romance with Teav. Tum's capacity to deceive seems to know no bounds. He has completely compromised Teav's reputation.

Regarding this episode, Leang Hap An states: "Love makes Tum forget his duties as a monk."<sup>169</sup> As for Teav, he concludes:

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<sup>168</sup> Venerable Botumthera Som, 1962.

<sup>169</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:48.

"She lets herself be ruled by love, forget right and wrong, good and bad, the tradition and admirable conduct for a young Khmer girl."<sup>170</sup>

In his discussion of Teav's mother and Ah Chun, Leang Hap An takes up the issue of abuse of power in Cambodian society. In the story, Ah Chun and his wife plan to arrange for Teav to marry their son, Murn Guon. They send representatives laden with fine gifts to meet with Teav's mother and discuss their proposition. Teav's mother greets them warmly but pretends to be reluctant to accept their offer, saying she must consult Teav and her family members before making any decision. In reality however, she is overjoyed at the prospect of her daughter marrying into the family of the Governor and fulfilling her dreams of wealth and status. She calls Teav to deliver the good news unaware that she has fallen in love with Tum:

383.

- a. Then she addressed her child saying, "My dear,
- b. "We should be happy!" Teav's mother's face was glowing.
- c. "I am giving you in marriage to the Governor's son,
- d. "So we can have happiness from our high rank and wealth!

384.

- a. "We will have power! We will have status!
- b. "Accordingly, your rank will rise!
- c. "I am talking to you! Now don't be proud
- d. "And impudent! Show some respect for your mother!

Regarding the question of Teav's mother's wrongdoing, Leang Hap An presents the viewpoint that at that point in the story Yay Phan is not aware of Teav's love for Tum, so she cannot be blamed for wanting her daughter

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<sup>170</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:51

to marry the son of the rich and powerful Governor. However, she is wrong to force her daughter to marry someone against her will:

“The fault of Yay Phan is the way she forces her daughter by using her authority, by not giving Teav the freedom to choose her happiness at all, saying that her mother and father bore her and took care of her.”<sup>171</sup>

Leang Hap An states that the use of force by parents in order to get their child to comply with their choice of marriage partner persists in modern Cambodia. Given Tum’s poor status, even if Teav had told her mother of her relationship with Tum, Yay Phan would not have changed her mind.

“Many people say that Yay Phan is bad because even if she knew that Teav loved Tum, she would not have liked it because Tum does not have power. This is a valid point, because even today Yay Phan’s kind of desire continues in the same way. This kind of wrongdoing is not only true for Yay Phan. It is an issue with many mothers in the past, present and future of the Cambodian people. This is why *Tum Teav* is called a true Cambodian story. It is a story that shows the Khmer heart and soul.”<sup>172</sup>

In another section of his analysis, Leang Hap An presents a perspective regarding Yay Phan’s use of force over her daughter that introduces another aspect of the relations of power at work in the story. According to this perspective, although Yay Phan may want her daughter to marry Murn Guon because of his wealth and status, at the same time, she is compelled to force Teav to marry the Governor’s son out fear of Ah Chun’s power.

“In addition, Yay Phan is a commoner without any status. She must respect and fear the power of Ah Chun who is like a king and had tremendous authority during that time. (As Yay Phan said on page 43:

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<sup>171</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:54.

<sup>172</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:56.



'Okna Ah Chun is too important! Under the sky, everything is lower than the mountain. Those with power don't ask! They just cut, stab and beat without mercy!')"<sup>173</sup>

Leang Hap An reminds us that *Tum Teav* takes places during the feudal period of Cambodian history when a provincial Governor's power was second only to that of the King. In the first part of the story, Ah Chun does not know about Teav's relationship with Tum and is therefore well within his rights as a parent to take steps to consider her as a possible marriage partner for his son. However, Leang Hap An points that even if he had known about their relationship, Ah Chun's position would have given him the prerogative to use his power to his liking. While this behavior may not be acceptable in modern Cambodia, Leang Hap An notes that abuse of power is still an issue in arranged marriages:

"Even if he knew that Teav was already engaged and he went ahead with arranging Teav's marriage to Murn Guon, this would have been wrong. Just because Ah Chun had power, he could do as he pleased during feudal times. ... All of this is a problem among Khmer families. That is, Ah Chun's kind of conduct exists a lot. Some families will go as far as bribing the parents of the girl to break off relations with a poor boy in order to get the girl for themselves whether by flaunting their power or showing off their wealth."<sup>174</sup>

### Ouk Saman (1966)

As mentioned above, Ouk Saman's 1966 critical text *A Study of Tum Teav* was intended as a study guide for third and first year lycée students. Saman's analysis of the story is arguably the most in-depth and thorough

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<sup>173</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:53-4.

<sup>174</sup> Leang Hap An, 1962:59-60.

of all the critical texts written on *Tum Teav*, and for that reason we will discuss his viewpoints on the story's characters and events in greater detail. Also, as with Saman's approach to the question of *Tum Teav*'s authorship, we are particularly interested in the philosophy of justice that underlies his analysis.

As Saman conducts his investigation into the culpability of each character for the tragic events in the story, he acknowledges the complexity of the different situations and the characters. He takes into account the context of a given event and challenges some of the more mainstream perspectives discussed above. For example, in his discussion of Ah Chun's killing of Tum, he rationalizes the Governor's actions despite the risk of appearing to support the abuses associated with feudalism:

"People who do not fully consider this will think that I support and protect vicious people like Ah Chun that have become symbols of the feudal period! ... But we say this not because we want to blame one side or the other. We only want to determine what is justice."<sup>175</sup>

Saman's discussion of King Reamea's punishment of Ah Chun is controversial as well. In this case, the question under consideration is whether the King's vicious punishment of Ah Chun is justified. According to Saman, if the punishment is excessive, then the King is at fault since he bears ultimate responsibility for the final decision. Saman defines the criteria for his analysis as follows:

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<sup>175</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:159-160.

"We understand that normally a king who is respected and venerated by the people should not be disobeyed by anyone. The king should be angry with anyone who disobeys him. Thus, the king must inflict punishment on the person equal to his crime and equal to the king's anger so that the person will be disgraced."<sup>176</sup>

In order to assess whether the King's punishment of Ah Chun is just, Saman asks if his anger at Ah Chun and the resulting punishment are commensurate with the crime. Saman begins by pointing out that the King has shown himself to be a compassionate and moral person when, after learning of their previous relationship, he gives up Teav and officially marries her to Tum. If the King is a good and compassionate leader, Saman asks, what happened to make him so angry? Recall the scene when Tum goes before King Reamea to ask for his help after he learns of Teav's impending marriage to Murn Guon. Enraged, the King uses a popular metaphor of the rock and the egg to describe the consequences for Ah Chun for challenging his supreme power:<sup>177</sup>

707.

- a. The King listened to every word.
- b. He issued his decree forthwith.
- c. "That rascal thief Ah Chhun will break like a chicken egg!
- d. "He's deluded to presume himself deserving of my support in this matter!"

708.

- a. "He doesn't know wrong from right, rice from weeds!
- b. "That thief is like a dog eating beef!
- c. "He dares to challenge me! That is a crime for which he must be boiled alive!

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<sup>176</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:155.

<sup>177</sup> That is, Ah Chun's challenge is comparable to an egg hitting a rock.

d. "I will haul him in then boil him alive in an iron skillet."

709.

a. "That thief will try to hide in the forest watching out for my attack.

b. "He's used to being on the run like the kvaek bird.

c. "That monkey doesn't know my big stick will crack his skull!

d. "The rascal's head... tomorrow... tomorrow... will roll!"

Saman argues that the King's anger at Ah Chun is caused by his belief that Ah Chun betrayed his orders (contained in the letter carried by Tum) and killed Tum for personal gain without regard for his authority. However, Saman says the King was wrong to assume that someone in Tum's condition of emotional stress would successfully deliver his edict. Thus, the King's anger is excessive and the punishment of Ah Chun and Yay Phan unjust:

"Doesn't the King realize that 'Murn Ek' is filled with grief and seized with pain and despite having the royal edict would be crazed and not deliver it? For this reason, the King's anger is beyond the limit for this case."<sup>178</sup>

Saman then provides additional reasons that mitigate the severity of Ah Chun's wrongdoing, making the case that Ah Chun does in fact respect King Reamea. Using the analogy of a cat and mouse, Saman argues that like a mouse Ah Chun is prone to being mischievous when the King is away. However, that does not mean that "the mouse" does not continue to fear "the cat." Ah Chun is willing to participate in Yay Phan's plan to separate Teav from Tum because the King is far away. However,

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<sup>178</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:157-158.

according to Saman, Ah Chun still fears and therefore respects the authority of the King, as evidenced by his panic after finding the letter on Tum's body and again when the King arrived with his entourage in Tbong Kmom to punish him.

In the closing scene of the story, the King arrives in Tbong Kmom with his army to punish those responsible for the deaths of Tum and Teav. Earlier, Ah Chun had found the King's edict on Tum's body and realized that he has defied the King's word. When the King arrives in Tbong Kmom, Ah Chun prepares elaborate offerings and goes with his family to present them to the monarch. He hopes for mercy but fears the worse:

984.

- a. Governor Ah Chun led the delegation,
- b. Along with his son and wife, to prostrate themselves before the King.
- c. Coming closer he saw that his Grace,
- d. The King, was meeting with his advisors.

985.

- a. The chief ministers and advisors
- b. Were gathered in close ranks before their monarch.
- c. Ah Chun delivered the offerings,
- d. Hoping the King would have mercy on him.

986.

- a. After presenting all the offerings,
- b. Ah Chun raised his hands in salute over his head
- c. And kept them properly positioned. During the meeting,
- d. The King showed no pity or respect for Ah Chun.

987.

- a. King Ream Reach, the powerful and meritorious,
- b. Who protected the people and was the overseer
- c. Of all places and things, including the Buddha's remains,

d. Listened, furious, ready to smash the offerings at any moment.

988.

- a. The monarch glared at him clearly enraged.
- b. Unnerved, Ah Chun's tears flowed staining his face.
- c. Seething with anger,
- d. The King's intentions remained

989.

- a. Twisted and black. He was disturbed
- b. And he didn't want to let Ah Chun go back.
- c. Unable to abate his anger
- d. He summoned the Royal Armed Forces.

The imperfect character of King Reamea in *Tum Teav* stands in contrast to the Preah Ream in the *Reamkei* or *Ramakerti*, the Cambodian version of the Indian epic the *Ramayana*, the classic tale of good and evil in Cambodian literature.<sup>179</sup> In the *Reamkei*, Preah Ream is the model of virtue. In a long series of battles, Ream and his brother, along with the white monkey general, Hanuman, wage war on the evil giant Ravana and his army. Ravana is finally defeated when Ream pierces his heart with a magic arrow proving that good ultimately prevails over evil. By killing

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<sup>179</sup> While Preah Ream in the *Ramayana* is an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, in the Cambodian version, Preah Ream is more closely associated with the Buddha. Prominent scholars such as the French-trained Cambodian linguist Saveros Pou consider the influence of Buddhism as a defining feature of Khmer literature. In "Études Ramakertiennes," for example, Pou analyzes the character of the epic's hero and various events in the story in terms of Buddhist concepts. In keeping with the Buddhist concept of Karma, Preah Ream's virtue is a result of his exemplary conduct in previous lives. Pou points out that the suffix, "kerti," of the epic's title, *Ramakerti*, means "glory" or "reputation." The glorification of his reputation follows the Buddhist practice of praising right action as exemplified by the life of the Buddha.

Ravana, Preah Ream fulfills his responsibility to protect his Kingdom and maintain peace and order.<sup>180</sup>

While Preah Reamea is of divine origin and consistently virtuous, King Reamea in *Tum Teav* has human flaws and imperfections. This is another feature that sets *Tum Teav* apart from classical Cambodian texts where the virtue of heroes and the evil of villains are straightforward and clear. As a transitional work between traditional and modern Cambodian literature, *Tum Teav* is full of characters and events that describe the conflicts and tragedies of daily life. The question of King Reamea's abuse of power is an example of this. Indeed, the behavior of all the characters in the story is far from the idealized characters that populate traditional Cambodian literature.

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<sup>180</sup> More than any other literary text, the characters and events from the *Reamkei* have been used as the basis for the other major Cambodian art forms, including classical dance; sculpture; the various forms of Cambodian masked theater; story telling to the accompaniment of the *chapi*, a two-stringed lute; and shadow theater. In his description of a shadow theater performance, Pech Tum Kravel notes that the performance represents the eternal battle between good and evil. For example, the fire that projects the light against the sheet that produces the shadows of the leather hand puppets is full of symbolism. The lighting of the fire represents the creation of the world and the birth of opposites: light and dark; hot and cold; good and evil, etc. Prior to the beginning of the first scene of the story, there is a kind of prologue in which the White Monkey and the Black Monkey, representing good and evil respectively, do battle.<sup>180</sup> The White Monkey is victorious and takes the Black Monkey to the Ascetic to be judged. The Ascetic concludes that the White and Black Monkey should learn to help each other and that the Black Monkey should be released. After this introduction, the story of Preah Ream begins.

Regarding Ah Chun's killing of Tum, Saman acknowledges Ah Chun's abuse of power; however, he rationalizes Ah Chun's actions saying that he was provoked by Tum's arrogance. The fact that Tum never showed Ah Chun the King's royal edict leads Saman to ask:

"Thus, isn't Tum the one who causes the King to lose his sense of morality and humanity and causes Yay Phan and Ah Chun to be subjected to such vicious and excessive torture?"<sup>181</sup>

Of particular interest for our purposes however is the reasoning behind Saman's argument. The association between respect and fear is a key element in his logic.<sup>182</sup> According to Saman, Ah Chun is innocent because he fears the King and thus respects him. That is, Ah Chun's fear of the King demonstrates his respect for him and his authority. Because Ah Chun does not see himself as being above the King or superior in power, the King's vicious punishment is excessive. In Tum's case, the opposite appears to be true. Tum shows no fear of Ah Chun. According to Saman, Tum's insolence and complete lack of respect for Ah Chun's rank and power justifiably provokes his violent response. Saman's logic is based conditions of feudal society according to which the underclass must show due respect, i.e. fear, for the ruling class in all situations. Not showing respect as required makes one justifiably subject to the harshest of punishments.

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<sup>181</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:198.

<sup>182</sup> The relation between respect and fear is discussed again in greater depth in the conclusion.



Turning to the question of Tum's wrongdoing, Saman begins by defining the context of Tum's actions in terms of the prescribed codes of conduct for a Buddhist monk. Saman states that Tum's repeated violation of the Buddhist precepts are initially triggered by his restlessness that instigates his leaving the temple in order to sell *taok* prayer tables with Pech in the surrounding villages. After meeting Teav in Tbong Kmom, he violates the discipline by adorning himself and using his beautiful voice in order to attract her. His transgressions continue with his lying to his mother and the Abbot and culminate with his disrobing without permission and subsequent sexual relations with Teav:

"The power of love pushed Tum to lie to the Abbot and his mother in order to disrobe and pursue a woman."<sup>183</sup>

As with his analysis of Ah Chun's wrongdoing vis-à-vis the King, Saman argues that there are extenuating circumstances that mitigate the severity of Tum's otherwise serious offences. That is, although Tum violates prescribed codes of conduct, he realizes that his actions are wrong, and he is willing to ask forgiveness. Saman points out that after he disrobes in the forest, Tum goes with Pech to the Abbot's quarters with offerings of incense and candles to confess his crimes:

"It's rare for someone to face up to his errors, but Tum does this. Tum goes to ask forgiveness from the Abbot after he disrobes. This shows his sincere devotion:

'I was wrong and improper in everything I did.

Please, I ask of you Venerable to save me.

Being just a student, I was made ignorant

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<sup>183</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:166.

By desires of the flesh.'"<sup>184</sup>

Saman continues his discussion of Tum's wrongdoing by presenting other extenuating circumstances. While Tum acts immaturely and is unable to check his emotions, he is also subject to forces beyond his control. Saman tells us that although Tum lets his feelings and passion for Teav get the better of him to the point that he compromises her virtue, he is still young and "does not yet have the power to be the master of his feelings."<sup>185</sup> If youth and immaturity is not reason enough to excuse Tum's actions, Saman reminds us that Tum is also under the spell of the scented scarf given to him by Teav:

"He has insufficient powers of reason and is always under the spell of the *pahom*, the symbol of Teav's love."<sup>186</sup>

Finally, despite all of his failings, Tum does demonstrate real courage (albeit lacking in discretion) when he sings about his love for Teav after she arrives at the King's Palace to take her place with the royal concubines:

"Love created a courage that was out of place in the presence of King Reamea of Lovek. ... Tum sang of his love for Teav who during that time was made a concubine of the King. But what luck, chance or fate that the King decided to give them the gift of justice and make Teav the wife of Tum."<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:167. The quote is from stanza 264 of *Tum Teav* by Botumthera Som.

<sup>185</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:167.

<sup>186</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:168.

<sup>187</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:169-170.

However, Saman does not make Tum into a tragic hero. Despite Tum's display of courage before the King and extreme love for Teav, he is not able to summon the strength and presence of mind to rescue Teav after he learns of her imminent marriage to Murn Guon at the end of the story. Rather than use the King's edict and stop the marriage, Tum falls into despair and begins to doubt Teav's faithfulness to him. Saman quotes the following stanzas from *Tum Teav* that describe Tum's sense of defeat "as though the King's edict has no value"<sup>188</sup>:

"Tum exclaimed, 'Oh, wind that blows!  
'Oh, Teav! Taken away! The scent of your perfume!  
'I can only touch the wafts of fragrance!  
'Teav! The greedy thieves took you away from me!

""They took you and left me all alone!  
'But Teav does not miss me! Beware of the heart of a woman!  
'A charming heart but without compassion and pity!  
'With Guon as her husband, she drops Tum!""<sup>189</sup>

Saman concludes that, "Tum's hopelessness made him lose his courage. Tum was weak and could only think of his own imminent demise."<sup>190</sup> For Saman, Tum does not have the qualities befitting a heroic character. As the moment nears when Tum will have to confront the power of Ah Chun, he loses hope, despite being armed with the King's edict:

"It is true that Ah Chun is a vicious person who abuses his power and disregards people's rights... but if Tum had courage, had fortitude and determination, he would have kept in mind the words: 'As long as you are alive, you should always have hope.'"

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<sup>188</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:172.

<sup>189</sup> Botumthera Som, *Tum Teav*, CEDORECK, 1986:94.

<sup>190</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:172.

For Saman, Tum clearly does not fulfill the role of a hero. Instead, in his confused desperation Tum gets drunk, fails to deliver the King's letter and provokes Ah Chun to take drastic measures and have him killed. Saman concludes that Tum "died like a snake and lived like a frog."<sup>191</sup>

As with his analysis of Tum, Saman identifies both good and bad qualities in Teav that make it difficult to excuse or to condemn her completely. According to traditional codes of conduct, she is clearly in the wrong to fall in love with a monk and to go so far as to encourage him with the gift of the perfumed *pahom*. Saman also finds fault with her stubbornness and disrespect for her mother's wishes:

"Teav doesn't comply with her mother who has offered her to Murn Guon. This shows that she is stubborn, and her disrespect of her mother's instructions are against the ancient tradition."

That said, Saman goes on to identify extenuating circumstances that excuse Teav's wrongdoing. First of all, Teav is a beautiful young woman with all the attributes that make her "the envy of everyone."<sup>192</sup> It is more difficult for her not to become attracted to someone and preserve her reputation than it is for another girl who is not as sought after. In addition, regarding her rejection of Murn Guon, Saman points out that, "happiness

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<sup>191</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:175. The expression refers to someone who has committed dishonorable acts and was cowardly when it came time to face the consequences.

<sup>192</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:176. See the work of Judy Ledgerwood for descriptions of *srey krup leak* [the girl with all the attributes] or "the ideal girl."

cannot arise against one's wishes," making Teav's refusal to comply with her mother's wishes not unreasonable.<sup>193</sup>

Finally, Saman states that Teav, like Tum, shows admirable courage when she confirms her love for Tum to the King after arriving at the royal Palace as described in the following stanzas:

"At that time, Tum was terrified of the King.  
He listened closely and quickly raised his joined hands respectfully.  
Tum addressed the King truthfully.  
'Please have mercy on me Your Majesty.

'Have me killed for my serious crime.  
'Condemn me to live as a slave of Your Highness.  
'I respectfully say as a slave and without deception  
'That Teav is in fact my fiancé.'

The King then questioned Teav.  
'Teav! I have given your situation close attention.  
'Speak truthfully. Do not be afraid.  
'Have you and Tum been together, or is this untrue?'

Teav addressed the august King.  
'Your Majesty, please have mercy on me.  
'Tum and I are exactly  
'As Your Majesty has already been informed.'"<sup>194</sup>

Their courage and respect for the King leads to their marriage with the King's blessing. However, Teav, again like Tum, is young and immature. Saman argues that Teav's naiveté, along with her concern for her mother, allows her to be fooled by her mother's letter telling her to return. Saman

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<sup>193</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:177.

<sup>194</sup> Venerable Botumthera Som, *Tum Teav*, 1962:stanzas 615-618.

also depicts Teav as a victim of her mother's machinations. When Tum returns to Tbong Kmom and finds Teav, Saman describes their momentary happiness as follows:

"But the love was not the heavenly love as before. This was happiness in a tiger's cage such that all the fierce animals were glaring at them showing their claws and fangs ready for the kill."<sup>195</sup>

In the final analysis however, Saman concludes that Teav, even more than Tum, lacked the courage and strength necessary to oppose effectively her mother and those whose abuse of power finally leads to her destruction.

While Saman has been fairly generous in his appraisal of the other characters, he is less forgiving in the case of Yay Phan. With King Reamea, Ah Chun, Tum and Teav, Saman identifies extenuating circumstances that to varying degrees justify their actions and mitigate their responsibility for the tragic events in the story. With Yay Phan however, this is not the case. Although Saman acknowledges that she wants the best for her child, he argues that this is to be expected of any parent and is not really a sign of virtue:

"As Teav's mother, she only wants happiness and security for her child. But is there a parent that doesn't want to give their child happiness and prosperity?"

Like most readers, Saman is skeptical of Yay Phan's underlying intentions. He suggests that her eagerness to accept Ah Chun's proposal reveals her obsession for wealth and status. Although Yay Phan consults Teav

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<sup>195</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:179.

regarding the offer of marriage, Saman argues that it is not in earnest. She does not expect Teav to object since she has always "listened to her mother." This is verified by the fact that after Teav refused, Yay Phan did her best to coerce her with appeals to *thoa* [moral principles, duty].

According to Saman, Yay Phan's wrongdoing and responsibility for the tragic events become more serious later in the story. First of all, being a mature woman with worldly experience, Saman argues that Yay Phan should have known that bringing Teav and Tum together in their house would lead to trouble. Saman describes it as putting sugar in front of an ant. According to the laws of nature, the ant cannot resist the sugar:

"She is an older person with a lot of life experience. Should she have so blithely put her trust in them [Tum and Teav] to the point that she would let the ant be with the sugar like that?"<sup>196</sup>

Later, Yay Phan's actions show that she is not really motivated by her concern for her daughter's welfare. Rather, it is her obsession for wealth and status that controls her behavior and blinds her to the consequences of her actions. According to Saman, this is evidenced by the decisions Yay Phan makes following Ah Chun's proposal. As mentioned above, Yay Phan becomes angry when Teav objects to the arranged marriage with Murn Guon. However, when Teav is chosen to be the King's concubine, Yay Phan forgets about the arranged marriage content that she and Teav would enjoy the security and comfort of life in the royal Palace:

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<sup>196</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:101.

"When she sees that the King has decided to choose Teav to be his concubine, Yay Phan becomes very happy once again and forgets all about Ah Chun. She forgets the arrangement between her and Ah Chun without the least regret."<sup>197</sup>

She quickly changes her mind again when the King marries Teav to Tum who is poor and without rank. Desperate, Yay Phan returns to Ah Chun and convinces him to revive their previous plans. At each turn, Yay Phan's decision is based on material gain and not Teav's best interests:

"But when she knows that her status as the mother-in-law of the King has turned into the mother-in-law of the destitute "Murn Ek," she quickly changes her mind and seeks out Ah Chun."

Yay Phan's treachery and deceit reaches its worst point at the end of the story. First, she tricks Teav into returning to Tbong Kmom with the letter telling her she is very ill. Then she urges Ah Chun to kill Tum when he arrives at the wedding ceremony:

633.

- a. "I had decided to give Teav to Mister Ah Chhun.
- b. "Murn Guon, his son, had even offered his hand!
- c. "He has wealth and high rank!"
- d. In anger, Teav's mother planned her revenge for many days.

634.

- a. As twilight fell, Teav's mother
- b. Dashed off a letter recklessly.
- c. She was willing to lose everything and bring on death
- d. Just to follow thoughtless flights of fancy.

635.

- a. Finished, Teav's mother left

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<sup>197</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:202.



- b. For the residence of Ah Chhun.
- c. They were like relatives to each other because of their mutual hope.
- d. Being a true friend like that, she told him her plan.

637.

- a. "I am so angry with that rascal Tum.
- b. "He has brought disgrace to my reputation.
- c. "He is arrogant and has no respect for anyone.
- d. "Now, I must ask you

638.

- a. "To find a way to prepare the desserts and food,
- b. "The pork, chicken, duck, fish and rice wine,
- c. "As well as vegetables of all kinds from all over.
- d. "I have prepared a letter and arranged for its delivery to

639.

- a. "Teav my child to have her come back home quickly.
- b. "The letter says that her mother who lives
- c. "Far away is seriously ill and feverish.
- d. "It instructs her to come home, as her mother's flesh and blood.

640.

- a. "'Return quickly before it's too late,' I repeated.
- b. "'I'm anxiously waiting, fearful
- c. "'My strength is very little... not enough to sustain me...
- d. "'If I don't see you, there will be a tragedy.'

641.

- a. "When Teav arrives,
- b. "Interrupt whatever you may be doing to set our trap.
- c. "She will be given to Guon to be his wife
- d. "As we had previously arranged."

In his assessment of Yay Phan's character, Saman concludes:

"[Yay Phan lowers herself this time to the point of being "the go between" and convinces Ah Chun to quickly prepare for Teav's marriage. Through her machinations, she has Teav leave Tum and

return to Tbong Kmom... Her malice and spite are not over yet. Yay Phan yells and forces Ah Chun to seize and kill Tum who has followed his wife to take her back to the royal Palace.”<sup>198</sup>

With the exception of Yay Phan, Saman’s analysis of wrongdoing in the story does not reach a definite conclusion in each case as with other critical texts on *Tum Teav*. I would argue that the expectation to arrive at a final determination as to whether a character is wholly “good” or “bad” is related to the all-important didactic function of Cambodian literature. A primary objective of the critical texts we have discussed is to teach the reader, typically a lycée student, right from wrong. Sometimes this is done explicitly. Other times, as with the question and answer format, the student is asked to “think about” the study question, but in the end the student is directed to the correct answer in the supplied response to the question. While Saman’s analysis of *Tum Teav* fulfills the didactic function of Cambodian literary texts, his assessment of the characters and events allows for greater complexity and ambiguity than the other analyses we have discussed.

#### Saem Sur (1970)

In 1970, Saem Sur’s critical text entitled *Special Commentaries* was published. The text analyzes and compares four works of traditional Cambodian literature, namely *Tum Teav*, *Reamkei*, *Mahavessatarajatak*, and *Bhogakulakumar*. Saem Sur’s text follows the same format as the

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<sup>198</sup> Ouk Saman, 1966:202-203.

other literary study guides whereby a question is posed and followed by a response from various perspectives.

One of the study questions in Saem Sur's text considers the conflicts that eventually lead to the deaths of Tum and Teav. In his response, Saem Sur identifies two conflicts in the story and presents opposing points of view for each case. He begins with the conflict caused by Teav's refusal to comply with her mother's wish to accept the offer of marriage from Governor Ah Chun and his wife on behalf of their son Murn Guon. Saem Sur responds to this question from two perspectives. The first is from the perspective of traditional codes of conduct for Cambodian young women, according to which Teav would be expected to comply with her mother's decision that marrying Murn Guon is in her best interests. The second perspective is from the modern viewpoint regarding personal rights and freedoms. According to this perspective, Teav's mother exceeds the limits of her parental authority by imposing her will on her daughter.

From a traditional point of view, Saem Sur places the blame for the conflict on Teav concluding, "Thus, Teav is the source of the conflict. She causes her own destruction."

According to this perspective, Teav's mother is doing what any mother in her situation would do. As far as Teav's mother knows, Teav has had no other suitors, so there is no reason for her to refuse such a propitious marriage offer. Teav on the other hand is unreasonable and obstinate, and her use of harsh language toward her mother is disrespectful and

unnecessary. As a widow who wants to assure her daughter's future well-being, Teav's mother is fully justified in getting angry and reminding Teav that "the cake is never bigger than the mold."

According to the opposing perspective, Teav's mother is at fault for abusing her traditional authority in order to achieve her own objectives. Saem Sur points out that Teav's mother reminds her daughter that "the cake is never bigger than the mold" primarily out of self-interest.<sup>199</sup> He argues that she would not have brought power of traditional expectations to bear if the offer of marriage had not come from someone with the wealth and power of Ah Chun:

"She invokes traditional codes of conduct saying 'the cake is never bigger than the mold' and uses it to control the life of her daughter. If someone other than Ah Chun had made the offer of marriage, she may not have agreed... When Ah Chun's go-between leaves, she is so overjoyed and excited that she tells Teav the news until she is out of breath, which shows how obsessed she is. When Teav objects, she uses traditional moral codes to stifle Teav quickly. Teav's opposition is the primary cause that leads her mother to hold onto her malevolence until Teav's death. Thus, Yay Phan is a mother who misuses tradition. She abuses her authority over her daughter and doesn't give her the right or freedom to choose a husband she likes."<sup>200</sup>

After considering both points of view, Saem Sur concludes that the traditional argument is more convincing, and thus Teav is the primary cause of the conflict that eventually leads to her death. Although Teav's mother may have abused her authority over her daughter, for Saem Sur the

<sup>199</sup> As we shall see in Chapter 4, this is the perspective held by the many Cambodian readers.

<sup>200</sup> Saem Sur, *Special Commentaries*, 1970:122-3.

end justifies the means. That is, the kind of wealth and status that marrying into the family of Ah Chun would bring "are the source of happiness for people."<sup>201</sup> Thus, wanting this for her daughter justifies Yay Phan's authoritarian tactics.

This is a somewhat surprising conclusion given the date of Saem Sur's text. One would expect Saem Sur to side with the modern perspective and have more empathy for Teav as she struggles in the name of love to assert her personal freedom and independence. In keeping with the notion that the perspectives presented in these texts of literary criticism reflect current political circumstances, one wonders to what extent and in what ways the war in Vietnam and the fall of Sihanouk's *Sangkum* government led to a conservative backlash as expressed in Saem Sur's conclusion on this conflict in *Tum Teav*.

The second conflict Saem Sur takes up concerns Tum's decision to disrobe without the permission of the Abbot. In this case, Tum defies the protocol that governs the actions of Buddhist monks. While Tum and Teav both oppose traditional cultural institutions, Tum's defiance is perhaps more drastic given the importance of Buddhism in Cambodian society.

Regarding Tum's wrongdoing, Saem Sur writes:

"This kind of behavior is a great wrongdoing that is against tradition of religion, against the tradition of customs and beliefs of that time.

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<sup>201</sup> Saem Sur, *Special Commentaries*, 1970:126.

Despite the fact that the date was not auspicious and that he did not have permission, Tum was stubborn and unruly."<sup>202</sup>

In the previous case, the conflict is set up by the go-between who conveys Ah Chun's offer of marriage on behalf of Murn Guon. In this case, it is set up by the Abbot's astrological calculations according to which Tum must wait four or five months before he disrobes. There are two possible responses: Tum can comply with the results of the Abbot's calculations, or he can oppose them. Tum's decision to oppose the Abbot leads to his return to Tbong Kmom and his sexual relations with Teav and eventually results in their deaths. On the other hand, the tragic ending would have been avoided, if Tum had followed the Abbot's instructions, just as in the first case Teav had obeyed her mother's wishes.

In his discussion of this conflict, Saem Sur considers the possibility that the Abbot is to blame for not fully appreciating the extent of Tum's distress and imposing an unreasonable obstacle in his way:

"If when Tum went to ask permission to disrobe, the Abbot had given it to him, Tum wouldn't have done such a thing. But the Abbot doesn't fully understand Tum's feelings that make him delirious for Teav. Preventing him to see her, makes Tum commit this wrongdoing."<sup>203</sup>

However, Saem Sur dismisses this argument saying that the Abbot has only good intentions for Tum and does not want to prohibit his love for Teav. In addition, the imposition of a specific waiting period of four or

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<sup>202</sup> Saem Sur, *Special Commentaries*, 1970:129.

<sup>203</sup> Saem Sur, 1970:230-231.

five months is not unreasonably long given the possible dangers. The Abbot therefore cannot be held accountable for Tum's wrongdoing. According to Saem Sur, in each case respectively Tum and Teav are primarily responsible for the failure to resolve the two primary conflicts that set off the events leading to the story's tragic conclusion.

### Vandy Kaonn (1973)

In 1973, Vandy Kaonn's text *Realisme et Romantisme* was published in Phnom Penh. Kaonn is one of Cambodia's best known modern intellectuals and his text provides a provocative example of the use of literature in general and *Tum Teav* in particular for expressing socio-political viewpoints. At the time of the text's publication, Cambodia was in turmoil. Corruption in the Lon Nol regime fueled with United States dollars had reached endemic proportions, and the civil war with the Khmer Rouge was becoming a losing battle. Within two years, Pol Pot's forces would take Phnom Penh and begin its reign of terror. In 1973, Vandy Kaonn was pursuing a sociology degree in France and trying to make sense of the chaos engulfing his country.<sup>204</sup> *Realisme et Romantisme* presents some intriguing ideas about the source of Cambodia's problems at

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<sup>204</sup> Vandy Kaonn (1942-) returned to Cambodia in 1974 to conduct research and was there at the time of the Khmer Rouge victory. Miraculously, he survived the Khmer Rouge regime. After 1979, Kaonn stayed in Cambodia and became involved in the Vietnamese-installed government. In 1981, he founded an institute of sociology for scientific and political research and served as its director. In 1989, he had a break with the communist party and government and returned to France seeking political asylum (Khing Hok Dy, 1993:118).

that time and the need to distinguish between what is real and what is romantic delusion in Cambodian culture and society.

Of particular interest for our discussion is Kaonn's viewpoint on the opposition between realism and romanticism as it relates to the application of Buddhist morality. For Kaonn, the Buddhist Law of Karma as expressed by the phrase "Do good, get good; do bad get bad" cannot be taken on blind faith. It must be applied critically with due consideration of the circumstances. To illustrate his point, Kaonn refers to an episode in the folk story *Judge Rabbit*. When asked for help by the crocodile that has been caught in a trap, Judge Rabbit refuses, even though Buddhist ethics would supposedly require him to show compassion. Kaonn points out however that it would be a romantic delusion to believe that by "doing good" and freeing his enemy the crocodile that Judge Rabbit would subsequently "get good." Judge Rabbit demonstrates good judgment and is not swayed by the crocodile's false promises. However, this is often not the case in Cambodian society where a misunderstanding of Buddhist ethics can distort realistic thinking:

"We can conclude that Judge Rabbit's refusal to help the crocodile comes from his refusal to believe the ideal (do good get good) because he clearly understands natural law. For this reason, we can conclude that Judge Rabbit is a character that depicts realism."<sup>205</sup>

Kaonn continues his argument using the example of Madame Bovary in Gustave Flaubert's novel in order to illustrate the difference between

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<sup>205</sup> Vandy Kaonn, 1973:7.



realism and romanticism in terms of personal emotions. Kaonn argues that although Emma Bovary's emotions are powerful and overwhelming, her appraisal of her circumstances and rejection of her honest yet ineffectual husband is realistic.<sup>206</sup> Romanticism is therefore not necessarily at odds with realism. He makes the same case for Tum and Teav. Although they are overcome with emotion, the love they feel for each other is real:

"In *Tum Teav*, Tum and Teav are characters who exemplify romanticism, who believe that there is nothing in the world that is greater than love. In addition, that love is 'the boss' of the destiny of people. Thus, one must make love great (*absolu dans l'amour*). As we have already seen, Tum and Teav can't enjoy their perfect love and would rather die. For, if one is committed to one's love, and it is not to be had, what else can give meaning or support their lives? ... Love can be devastating. It can be real."<sup>207</sup>

Conversely, supposedly rational behavior becomes unrealistic when it causes a deluded response to one's situation. According to Kaonn, this is the case with Teav's mother. After the offer of marriage from Murn Guon's parents on behalf of their son, Yay Phan becomes infatuated with delusions of wealth and rank that are irrational. Yay Phan's materialistic ambition in the name of doing what is best for her daughter is a deluded distortion of the Buddhist notion of "doing good." Her excessive desire prohibits natural and realistic behavior.<sup>208</sup> Thus, Kaonn interestingly deconstructs the opposition between realistic and romantic behavior to show that the excessive and romantic emotions of Emma Bovary, Teav

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<sup>206</sup> Vandy Kaonn, 1973:9-11.

<sup>207</sup> Vandy Kaonn, 1973:30-31.

<sup>208</sup> Vandy Kaonn, 1973:90-91; 100-101.

and Tum are realistic responses to their circumstances, while the supposedly realistic motives of Yay Phan are actually romantic delusions.

Kaonn develops his argument by showing that the source of Yay Phan's romantic delusions is the relations of power in Cambodian feudal society. Using Marxist-like class theory, Kaonn argues that Cambodian's traditional codes of conduct and systems of education are designed to allow the elite to maintain power and dominance over the underclass. Traditional systems of education maintain the feudal social system through expressions such as "The cake is never bigger than the mold," "Someone with short arms shouldn't try to hug a mountain" and "A chicken's egg cannot become a stone." This method of instruction perpetuates the belief in the elite's supposed superiority and the underclass's dependence on them. The terms of the relationship are defined as well in administrative titles such as "Owner of my life over my head."<sup>209</sup> Kaonn argues that Buddhist notions of Karma and reincarnation have been improperly incorporated into these teachings to convince people that the wealth and status of the elite are due to merit and good actions performed in previous lives. Accordingly, improving one's social status can only be improved in a subsequent life or in some cases through connections with the elite, through marriage for example.

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<sup>209</sup> Vandy Kaonn, 1973:71-72.

While Yay Phan may believe that she is acting out of love for her daughter and has only her best interests in mind, in reality she is intent on joining the elite ranks of Cambodia's feudal hierarchy. She is well aware that as a middle class widow her aspirations are out of reach, and the only way for her to achieve this status is by using her authority over her beautiful daughter to arrange her marriage as advantageously as possible. Thus, according to Kaonn, the source of Yay Phan's romantic jubilation is the prospect for social advancement in a social structure that offers few other opportunities. Likewise, feudal society causes her to become hysterical and irrational in response to Teav's opposition to the marriage with Murn Guon. Referring to the teachings of the Buddha, Kaonn advises parents not to impose their will on their children, if it means inflicting torture on them:

"Can we say that Yay Phan is stupid for thinking that Teav's happiness depends on acquiring wealth? Could she have known beforehand that Teav would kill herself along with Tum? I fully believe that she could not have known beforehand. *Therefore, Yay Phan's biggest fault (as with all Cambodian mothers) has to do with imposing her own view on Teav in order to solve her problems once and for all.* In doing this, Yay Phan violates Teav's freedom to choose. It is quite true that Yay Phan foresees that if Teav marries Tum she would not be as well off as she would be by marrying Murn Guon... *But* Yay Phan should realize that that kind of excessive realism would turn out to be meaningless. Our lives are our own, not someone else's, no matter if you are the other person's mother, father, aunt, uncle or grandparent. This is the philosophy of the Buddha our teacher. If Teav becomes miserable because of Tum's lack of resources, it is Tum's and Teav's life. It is normal for a mother (or a father) to feel sorry for their child if she is lovesick and try to help her. But don't be too overbearing because feeling passion is part of being human. Regarding Yay Phan, if her daughter has fallen in love like this, she should think, 'Tearing her away won't work. Better to let her go.' I believe that doing that is both realistic and humane. What are we alive to do? If we live to inflict

torture, this kind of torture will not bring happiness. Does Yay Phan realize this? Do Khmer mothers realize this?"<sup>210</sup>

Kaonn's solution to Cambodia's social problems is based on a correct understanding and application of the Buddha's teachings that are the basis of Cambodian morality and traditional culture. In the Buddha's teachings, he says, aphorisms such as "the cake is never bigger than the mold" do not exist. To the contrary "the Buddha taught us not to love wealth and rank because they are nothing but illusions." Finally, Kaonn points out the hypocrisy of Yay Phan calling herself a Buddhist: "How can Yay Phan in the name of being a Buddhist turn around and act contrary to its morality. Why isn't this considered a scandal?"<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Vandy Kaonn, 1973:99-100.

<sup>211</sup> Vandy Kaonn, 1973:101.

## Chapter 4: Tum Teav Today

### *Introduction*

In July and August 1999, I visited Cambodia in order to conduct research for this dissertation. I had two main objectives. The first was to visit the town of Tbong Kmom in Kompong Cham province and speak with local residents about the story. The second was to conduct interviews about *Tum Teav* with writers and scholars in Phnom Penh, including Mr Pech Tum Kravel, a famous actor and playwright associated with dramatizations of the story, and writers at the Khmer Writers Association.

Soon after my arrival in Phnom Penh, it was clear to me that *Tum Teav* continues to be an important part of Cambodian culture and society. On my first day in Phnom Penh, I read in the *Cambodia Daily* that a *Yike* performance of the story was being performed at the Chatamuk Theater.<sup>212</sup> A few days later, in the April 1999 issue of the popular magazine *Pracheaprey*, I found an article describing a previous *Yike* performance of *Tum Teav* at the Chatamuk Theater in March. The article praises the talents of Mr. Sok Tong, the actor who played the part of Tum, and comments on the difficulties faced by performers of traditional arts in Cambodia.<sup>213</sup> For example, the wife of Mr Sok Tong was unable to attend

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<sup>212</sup> Unfortunately, the production, which had been ongoing for a month, had just ended the day before I arrived, so I was not able to see it.

<sup>213</sup> According to the article, Mr Sok Tong's uncle was also an actor prior to the generation of Mr Pech Tum Kravel, the renowned modern actor of the role of Tum.

her husband's performance because it was necessary for her to be at the local market to sell desserts to help support their family. Finally, the article quotes Mr Hong Soth, the director of the Institute of Performing Arts and Culture, as saying that one of the problems confronting Cambodian arts "comes from foreign culture that is taking over Cambodian culture."<sup>214</sup>

**Figure 5: Pracheachon No. 105, April 1999**



Indeed, the legacy of *Tum Teav* and the relation of the events in the story to actual people and places in Cambodian history continue to be of interest today. During a day trip to the village of Tbong Kmom, I was escorted to

<sup>214</sup> My interview with Mr Hong Soth is below.

the Bo tree where Teav had supposedly killed herself, and I spoke with a local family about the story. Coincidentally, two articles that discuss the locations where Tum and Teav died were published in a Phnom Penh newspaper and magazine around the time of my visit. The two articles, along with a brief description of my visit to Tbong Kmom, are discussed in the first part of this chapter. Also included here are some of photographs I took of the town, as well as the Bo trees where Tum and Teav are said to have died.<sup>215</sup>

In the second part of the chapter, excerpts from the interviews I conducted with members of the Khmer Writers Association and others are presented. As in Chapter 3, viewpoints on morality, abuse of power, and notions of justice as they relate to the story are of particular interest. Here, the viewpoints range from those of Mr Pech Tum Kravel, for whom the character of Tum has been a profound source of inspiration in his life, to those of Mr Youk Chhang, the director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, who relates the story to his pursuit of justice for the victims of the Cambodian genocide.

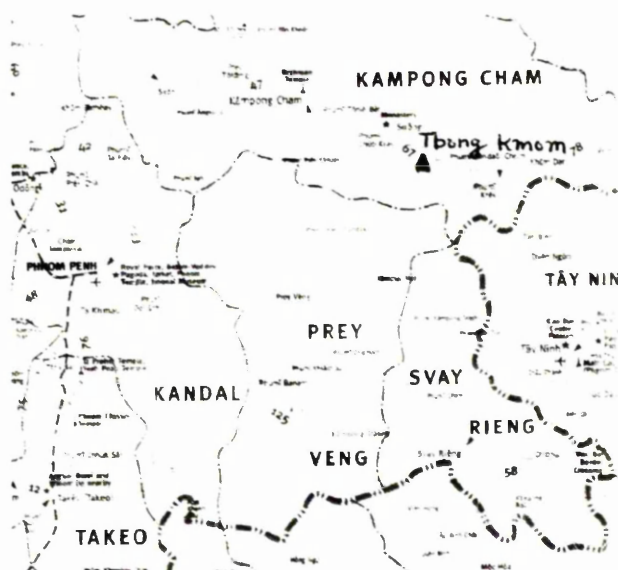
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<sup>215</sup> Special thanks to Ms Tomoko Okada and Ms Hiromi Ueda of the Tokyo University Of Foreign Studies for bringing these articles to my attention.

### ***Tbong Kmom Today***

On July 25, 1999, I made a trip to Tbong Kmom by jeep.<sup>216</sup> The driver and I, along with a third passenger, departed Phnom Penh at 6 AM and returned the same day before dark.<sup>217</sup> From Phnom Penh, we traveled along Highway 5, turned east onto Highway 6, then continued along Highway 7 to Kompong Cham, where we crossed the Mekong River aboard a large ferry boat. The village of Tbong Kmom is just past the town of Suong along Highway 7. We arrived there in the early afternoon, after making a stop at a large rubber plantation. The map below shows our route:

**Figure 6: Route to Tbong Kmom**



<sup>216</sup> The jeep and the driver were provided to me compliments of the Documentation Center of Cambodia.

<sup>217</sup> While traveling during the day was not considered dangerous, it was not advisable to travel the roads at night because of bandits. Apparently, the third passenger came along to provide additional security.



Below is a photograph of the ferryboat that carried us, along with our vehicle, across the Mekong River. In the distance, you can see the large pilings of the new bridge currently under construction with Japanese aid:<sup>218</sup>

**Figure 7: Ferry Boat Crossing Mekong at Kompong Cham**



When we arrived in Tbong Kmom, we inquired at a roadside restaurant to find someone who might guide us to some of the places mentioned in the story. A few minutes later, a young girl about ten- or twelve-years-old came along to escort us around the village. She took us first to a large Bo tree across a field of watercress where she said Teav had killed herself. Unlike the written version of the story, according to which Tum and Teav

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<sup>218</sup> The road is heavily traveled by merchants carrying goods to and from Vietnam. Highway 7 is wide enough to accommodate two lanes of traffic. However, there are many people who travel by bicycle or moto heavily laden with merchandise. They must share the rode with fast moving cars and trucks and their own risk. There are many accidents, and on one occasion I saw a women riding a bike that was knocked over by a car that simply continued on its way.

both died under the same tree, the young girl told us that they had died in different locations.

**Figure 8: Bo Tree Where Teav is Believed To Have Killed Herself**



The girl then led us to the Bo tree where, she said, Tum was killed.<sup>219</sup> The tree is located on the other side of the village down an ox cart path that leads to a large open space filled with rice fields. The large tree stands at the edge of one of the rice fields, not far from a small hut where an older man lives alone. When the man saw us approach the Bo tree, he came out to greet us. He explained that a local spirit, known as a *neak ta*, occupies the tree, and to propitiate the spirit, he makes regular offerings of incense

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<sup>219</sup> I do not know the age of the Bo trees that I was shown. However, they obviously could not have been the same trees described in the story that supposedly took place in the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is more likely that the story's popularity makes Tbong Kmom a tourist destination, and identifying the sites provides some minimal income for guides such as ours.

sticks. Below is a photograph of the tree that shows the burnt sticks of incense:

**Figure 9: Bo Tree Where Tum is Believed To Have Been Killed**



Our last stop on our brief tour of Tbong Kmom was at the house of the girl's family. We were kindly welcomed into the traditional house built on stilts and offered cold drinks. Although everyone stated they were aware of the story, our discussion soon turned to the more pressing problems confronted by the people of the village. Apparently, theft committed by armed gangs comprised of former soldiers was a common occurrence. In this case, the family's motor scooter had been stolen a few months before my visit. The motor scooter was bought on credit and used to transport the watercress they grew to the market in Suong. The theft of the scooter placed them in serious financial difficulty, and they claimed that there was no legal recourse available to them since the police force was not willing

to listen to their case.<sup>220</sup> Below is a photograph of the family during our visit:

**Figure 10: Visit with Our Guide's Family in Tbong Kmom**



While my short visit to Tbong Kmom was interesting for many reasons, it did not provide many answers concerning the relation between the events in the story and historical truth. However, the question of the historical facts of the story continues to be a matter of debate. For example, in the July 21, 1999, issue of *Rasmei Kampuchea*, Phnom Penh's most popular daily, there is an article entitled "There are Differing Views Regarding the Bo Tree Where Tum Was Killed." The article begins by identifying Preah Botumthera Som as the author of *Tum Teav* and stating that the story took place in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It then presents three different opinions regarding the location of the Bo tree where Tum was supposedly killed. According to one viewpoint, the Bo tree is located north of Highway 7. According to another, it is located south of the highway. According to the third, the tree

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<sup>220</sup> While the family may have tried to exaggerate their difficulties in order to appeal to my sympathies in the hopes of a larger fee for their daughter's services as our guide, it was clear to me that their financial difficulties and poverty were very real.



The primary sources for the article are older residents of Tbong Kmom. A 74-year-old man named Mr Kan Son, who was told the story by his grandfather when he was around twelve-years-old, identified various locations where events in the story take place, such as the place where Tum and Pech sell *taok* tables during the journey from their temple in Ba Phnom. Another man interviewed in the article named Mr Som Phan, 82-years-old, identified a hill in Tbong Kmom known by the residents as "the hill where Tum recited scriptures." There is another hill, he said, known as "the depository" where, the valuables of Teav's mother were stored "because during that time, Yay Phan had wealth and status in the society of 'the cake is never bigger than the mold.'" Finally, Mr Som Phon informed *Rasmei Kampuchea* that there is a mound near "the depository" around which a monk had built a fence after the end of the Pol Pot regime in 1979. Mr Som Phon stated that the residents suspect that the monk built the fence "because that mound was perhaps the place where the bodies of Tum and Teav had been buried."

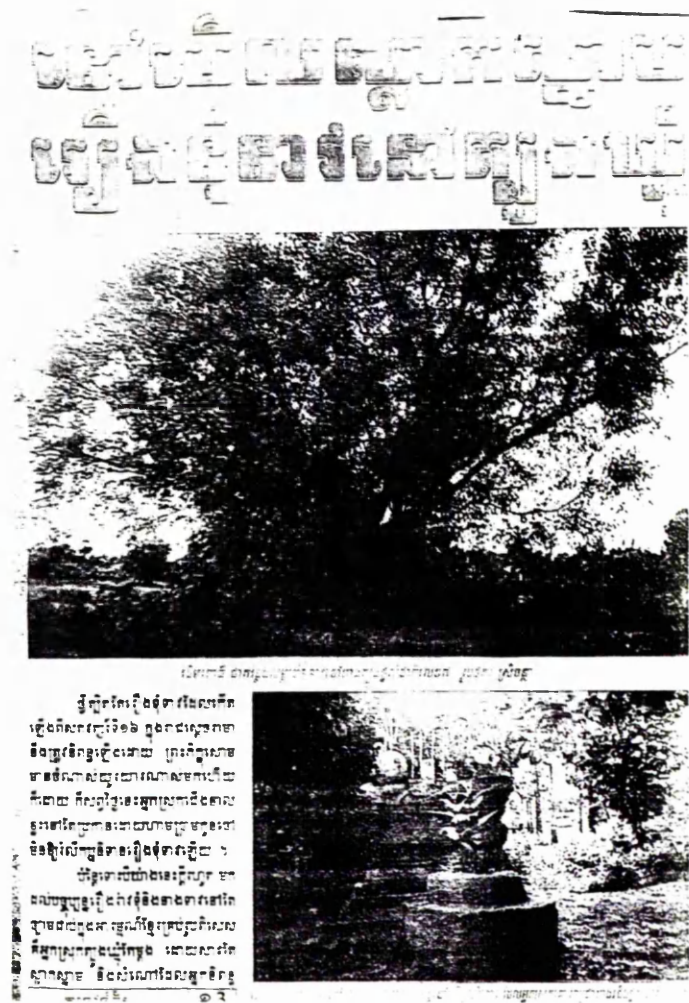
The end of the article describes the location of a Bo tree south of Highway 7, where it is believed that Tum was killed. Reiterating the importance of the story in Cambodian culture, the conclusion of the article states:

"The people of Tbong Kmom in Kompong Cham province tell us that the authorities of Tbong Kmom or Kompong Cham must preserve these places as historical tourist sites."

Below is a copy of the first part of the June 1999 *Rasmei Kampuchea* article:



Figure 11: "Going to See the Traces of *Tum Teav* in Tbong"



Below are some photographs of Tbong Kmom that were taken as we left the village to return to Phnom Penh:

**Figure 12: Our Guide's House in Tbong Kmom**



**Figure 13: Tbong Kmom Guest House**



### ***Interviews***

In July and August of 1999, I conducted several interviews with writers and scholars in Phnom Penh regarding *Tum Teav*. All of the interviews with the members of the Khmer Writers Association were conducted at the



Association's office on the grounds of a small temple in Phnom Penh.<sup>222</sup>

The interviews with Mr Pech Tum Kravel, Mr Hong Soth and Mr Youk Chhang were conducted at their respective offices. All of the interviews were recorded on audio tape and later transcribed.

### **Short Biographies of Interviewees**

The short biographies that follow provide some general information about the lives of each interviewee. Of particular interest here is their educational background, how and when the interviewee first read *Tum Teav*, as well any opinions about the author and historical basis of the story.

Not surprisingly, all of the interviewees had read *Tum Teav*, most of them in high school before 1975. For some of the interviewees, the story has had a particularly strong influence on their life, most notably here are Mr Pech Tum Kravel, Mr Hong Soth and Mr Youk Chhang. Another important common experience for all of the interviewees is the genocide between 1975 and 1979 under the Khmer Rouge, during which most of the interviewees lost family members.

Finally, most of the interviewees endured the hardships of daily life under the Vietnamese installed government of Hun Sen as it attempted to rebuild

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<sup>222</sup> This was a different and smaller office than the Association's previous location on the grounds of the more attractive Wat Ounalom where in 1996 I first met the writers interviewed here.

the country under an economic embargo by Western countries. The government propaganda, described in Chapter 3 in the section on the Ministry of Education's 1989 critical text on *Tum Teav*, has also had an influence on the way some of the interviewees interpret the characters and events in the story.

### Mr Pech Tum Kravel

Mr Pech Tum Kravel was born in 1943 in Kandal Province. From 1960 to 1963, he attended the School of Pedagogy in Phnom Penh. The following year, he was enrolled at the National School of Theater. Finally, from 1965 to 1967, he studied at the University of Fine Arts in the School of Choreographic Arts.

**Figure 14: Mr Pech Tum Kravel**



He began his career as an actor in documentary and film productions in Phnom Penh. From 1965 to 1967, he was also a teacher at the National

Conservatory for Performing Arts. A highlight of his early career was his work with Ta Dep, a master of Cambodian shadow puppets. In 1968, Mr Pech Tum Kravel performed with Ta Dep on tour in Malaysia and Singapore.

After the fall of Phnom Penh in 1975 to the Khmer Rouge, Mr Pech Tum Kravel was forced to evacuate the city along with the rest of the population. He miraculously survived the Pol Pot regime, and in 1979 he returned to his previous occupation. It was at this time that he changed his name to Pech Tum Kravel.<sup>223</sup> From 1979 to 1981, he was the deputy director of the National Department of Art and the director from 1982 until 1993. In 1994, he worked at the Cambodian Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts until 1997, when he took a position with Radio Free Asia in Washington, D.C. He returned to Cambodia in 1999, and currently he is the deputy minister of the Ministry of Culture. In addition to his work and documentation of Cambodian theater, Mr Pech Tum Kravel has written a book on Cambodian verse patterns.

When asked about the significance of *Tum Teav* in his life, Mr Pech Tum Kravel responded:

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<sup>223</sup> Mr Pech Tum Kravel's father's name was Ah Chun Chhorn, and Mr Pech Tum Kravel's given name was Tord. Thus, his original, full name was Chhorn Tord. After 1979, he changed his name to Pech Tum Kravel because, he said, he has "known so many famous dramas and novels, and the most well-known to international audiences is *Tum Teav*. In performances of *Tum Teav*, I played the role of Tum, the name which I am proud to adopt."

"I was an actor, and studying *Tum Teav* was necessary before playing the role of Tum. I loved the character of Tum, because it is an epic story of tragic romance. We normally compare him to Romeo. *Tum Teav* is the same kind of story, except one is Khmer and the other is western. The content and plot, which I dearly love, is very similar.

"In addition, we were able to see ideas from the past in the story. For example, the power of the ruling class over poor and innocent people, and the conservative values of Khmer people. For example, to be a proper daughter, a girl must obey her parents or husband. However, Teav is a character that represents mainstream thinking because she represents some ideas that are opposite to conservative values. This is why we value *Tum Teav* as one of the most popular among a general audience. This is the reason why audiences love the play. *Tum Teav* has been performed in theatres very frequently since I was very young until the war broke out. The play often traveled around the country."

When asked how he first became aware of *Tum Teav*, he responded:

"If I am not mistaken, it was first taught in the sixth or seventh grade. Also taught in those grades were other novels, such as *Sopha*, *Kolab Pailin*, *Phka Srapoan* and other classical texts such as, *Sabasit*, *Kakei*, *Moranakmeada*, *Sophimit*, etc., all of which were part of our public school curriculum. This is one reason why many Cambodians came to know the story.

"In addition, I did some personal research of our history. The research concluded that the story was an actual event in our history, and that the story had been passed on orally through *chapei* singers. The monk Venerable Som, the author, listened to those *chapei* singers and retold the story in his manuscript. We understood that the story possibly occurred in the history of Cambodia, specifically during the reign of King Reamea Cheung Prey, who was the son of King Orng Chann, between A.D. 1566 and 1576. But what we learned from Venerable Som is that the story occurred during the reign of King Reamea Cheung Prey, which was after the reign of King Morhendrakreachea. Nevertheless, there is further evidence of the story's historical basis in *Mahaboros Khmer* [Eng Soth's, *Documents on Great Khmer Figures*,

1969] that is technically the national history of Cambodia after the Great Angkorian Empire until contemporary times.

### Mr Hong Soth

Mr Hong Soth was born in 1947. His musical talents were apparent when he was very young, and he started his formal musical training at the age of ten. From 1957 to 1961, he attended the Institute of Performance Arts, during which time he also attended music school in China. In 1962, he sat for exams at Cambodia's National School of Music, and in 1963 he became a teacher of music. In 1965, he joined with Mr Vann Moulivann and Mr Hong Hun Hak to start a school of modern arts in Cambodia. In 1968, he became a professor of music in the School of Education at the University of Phnom Penh, where he taught music theory, cultural, art and piano until 1975. Mr Hong Soth is currently the director of the Performing Arts and Cultural Institute in Phnom Penh.

**Figure 15: Mr Hong Soth**



When asked about the fate of Cambodian arts under the Khmer Rouge regime, Mr Hong Soth stated that Cambodian music and cultural appreciation was reduced to ashes:

"I lived in a slave-like environment. I was not well fed, but I did not complain. On January 7, 1979, we were saved from the genocidal regime. I lost 27 relatives. I can't forget and forgive, but because our country needs reconciliation for peace and stability, we need to be calm and contain our anger. At one point, I was so depressed, I felt I never wanted to be Cambodian again, but because of gratitude and the liberation of January 7, 1979, we were reborn and able to start again. I believe that we must not flee anywhere. We should try to reduce our pain and frustration about the past and dream for peace."<sup>224</sup>

"In 1979, we got together and made an announcement on the radio to encourage old comrades to come out of hiding and help to rebuild the country. I was elected to be the president of the group. In 1980, I was deputy director to Peov Yuoleng, who was the President, and Pech Tum Kravel who was the Vice President. In June 1980, Mr Keo Chanda, the Minister of Culture and Information, was sent to study in Vietnam and the former Soviet Union in order to reopen the School of Performing Arts again. On December 19, 1980, we inaugurated the school officially. We gave special consideration to orphans and later on we selected regular children. There were 480 students accepted into the schools of dance, drama, magic, and entertainment.

"At first, students sat on the ground, and later on we had all kinds of supplies because I was working closely with UNICEF and World Vision with the support of Mr Pol Sun and Vun. I also have had great support from Minister Keo Chenda. Up until 1993, I was director, and Pech Tum Kravel was an executive specialist. Overnight, we acquired all kinds of things that we used to have in the past. Nevertheless, we

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<sup>224</sup> Mr Hong Soth's response echoes the government rhetoric that depicts the Vietnamese as saving Cambodia from the Pol Pot regime, as well as the current propaganda that calls for peace and reconciliation in response to international efforts to bring the Khmer Rouge leadership to trial for crimes against humanity.

still lack resources, supplies, money, and a livelihood for student-actors. So we are still lacking many needed resources.

"In the past, we lived with our heart and soul. It is the lack of heart and soul that leads to the killing and fighting among us, and we can't understand what is what. Our role is to develop a sense of pride and nationalism and identity and to educate the people. One of our main goals is to fill an intellectual need while other entities will provide the bone, blood and muscle of the country. In the future, we will be able to escape all horrible accidents."

Mr Hong Soth has written one play that has not been published yet. He has also written for the national theater and is a main writer for the University of Performing Arts.<sup>225</sup> Mr Hong Soth described *Tum Teav* this way:

"*Tum Teav* is one of the oldest Cambodian novels. In 1960, it was serialized in one newspaper but had not yet become a finished product. The story depicts events that occurred during the Lovek era, although the story was written in the Udong period. However, the setting of the

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<sup>225</sup> Mr Hong Soth conducted considerable research after he returned from China and formed the School of Modern Performing Arts, with the help of scholars such as Mr Cheng Phon. They researched all sources of ancient music and went to various places around the country such as Pailin, Pursat and Rathanakiri and brought back the various dances and plays from each location. They also located the scores of Cambodian music that they were able to play using international music notation. However, everything was lost in 1975. Between 1968 and 1974, the number of specialists of this kind of profession was about 5000 people. There were only 90 professionals left after the Pol Pot regime.

In 1986, he helped to create the University of Modern Performing Arts for a second time. They now have a more extensive curriculum than during their golden age. However, there is still a lack of money for technical, facility and living expenses for all artists. At the present time, five different groups have been organized in the province of Siem Reap to receive international guests and Cambodians from other provinces that go there to visit the ancient monuments. The university presents plays at theaters every Saturday night in twenty-three cities and town across the country, so that audiences can be aware of the beauty of Cambodian culture

story is from the Lovek period. The person who composed the story was Venerable Som. He collected the documents from old manuscripts, many parts of which were missing, but which nevertheless the Venerable completed. Now the story is a textbook that is required reading in the educational curriculum.

"In 1968, Mr Pech Tum Kravel wrote the story in a dramatic format. *Tum Teav* is the *Romeo and Juliet* of Cambodia. It is well known, and from my understanding, it has a very comparable value [to *Romeo and Juliet*]. The story presents the norms and values of the common people, the middle class, as well as the upper class, royal family and religious community at the time. The story depicts the pain and suffering of the oppressed people by the ruling class. This is a story about justice.

"It also depicts Khmer values at a time when most children today have forgotten such things like what it means to be "in the shade." The idea is to educate the bride-to-be and prepare her for marriage and motherhood. There was no time limit. It depended upon the class of each family. If the family was well-to-do, it would be longer. Usually it lasted about one or two weeks. In 1990, the performance of *Tum Teav* was popular. The capacity of the theater was 1,200 people, and it was full twice a day for three months. In 1993, the play was performed at the national theater."

### Mr You Bo

You Bo was born in 1942. Between 1963 and 1964, he was a teacher in junior high school. In 1962, he published a poem entitled "Knowledge of Happiness" and studied to be a writer at the Khmer Writers Association. Later that year, he published his first collection of poems, and in 1964, he published his first novel, entitled *The 195-Year-Old Doctor*. In 1964, he worked as a reporter and editor translating French to Khmer. In 1967, he became a director of *Sophearmit* newspaper before working as a reporter again in 1968 and 1969.

Mr You Bo has written a total of ten novels. Among them are:



Woman of Chenla Island

Dos Kramom Sword

Toothpick Man

Five Steps of Magic

Krom Kommar Kloaktip

Burning Desire of Faithful Love

Faithfulness.

**Figure 16: (left to right) Ms Pal Vannarirak, Mr You Bo, Ms Pol Pisey and Ms Nomola Yim**



In 1979, Mr You Bo went back to Phnom Penh and served as the director at the Cultural Institute until 1984. During that time, he also studied Vietnamese. In 1990, he was a director at *Choulevath Pheapyon* film

studios where he directed three movies.<sup>226</sup> In 1993, he re-established the Khmer Writers Association and became the director. In 1993, he also worked a translator for the United Nations in Banteay Meanchey Province.<sup>227</sup>

When asked about *Tum Teav*, Mr You Bo's response recalls the 1989 political interpretation of the story by the Ministry of Education discussed above in Chapter 3:

"Venerable Som wrote the book. According to my understanding, the story is part of a cultural revolution because it incited people to act against oppression and the inequality between children and parents, as well as the rich and poor. The author did not want such oppression to prevail."

### Mrs Pal Vannarirak

Mrs Pal Vannarirak was born in 1954 in Kompong Chhnang province where her father, an official in the Royal Government under Norodom Sihanouk, was located. She attended school in Kompong Chhnang from the second grade up to high school. When her family subsequently moved to Phnom Penh, she attended Yukonthor High School, where she obtained the second part of her baccalauréat before the Khmer Rouge took power in 1975.

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<sup>226</sup> He wrote the first movie himself. Ms Pal Vannarirak wrote the second, and Mao Samnang wrote the third.

<sup>227</sup> In May 1993, UN-sponsored elections were held in Cambodia.

During the Pol Pot Regime, she lived in Kampong Cham province and was forced to dig canals and farm rice. During that time, four members of her family lost their lives: her father, mother, and two siblings, who disappeared and apparently died.

In 1989, she competed in the government's annual writing competition, and won first and second place for her two novels. Ms Pal Vannarirak has written twenty-two unpublished sentimental novels and six revolutionary novels, two of which have been published. Currently, Ms Pal Vannarirak is the director of the Office of Information in the Chamkar Mon District of Phnom Penh, as well as a member of the Khmer Writers Association. She stated that the salary she receives from her job is not sufficient to live on in the city, but she is able to supplement her income by writing. She is a scriptwriter for video and film productions and is the Executive Director of Khmer Video Production, Inc. In addition, she has managed to supplement her income by selling her literary and documentary works to non-governmental organizations. She has written on various topics, such as AIDS, family violence, health, and she has written commercials for television as well.

She first read *Tum Teav* in high school in Phnom Penh in the third year.

### Mrs Nimola Yim

Nimola Yim was born in 1957. In 1975, the year Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge, she received her Diplome (roughly the tenth grade). Under

the Pol Pot regime, there was no formal education system, and it was not possible for her to pursue her education further.

After the fall of Phnom Penh, she was forced to relocate to Saang District in Kandal Province. Ms Nimola Yim stated that many people died in that region, and the mental distress was tremendous. She lost her mother, father, older brother, and two younger sisters. Currently, she is working in the Development Center of Cambodian Women. To supplement her income, she also has a salt farm.

Ms Nimola Yim is a member of the Khmer Writers Association. She first read *Tum Teav* when she was at Endreaktevey High School during the Lon Nol Regime in her third year [tenth grade].

#### Mrs Pol Pisey

Mrs Pol Pisey was born in 1958. Her education ended in 1975 at the start of the Pol Pot regime. At that time, she was preparing for final examinations for junior high school. Her father was a teacher, poet, and a member of the Buddhist and Cultural Debate Club. Mrs Pol Pisey stated that she inherited her love for writing from her father. Currently, she works in the Cambodian Women News Center where the members are all women.

Mrs Pol Pisey is also a member of the Khmer Writers Association. She first read *Tum Teav* at school. "It is a story that everyone knows in

Cambodia,” she said. “Students study the novel in the *tnak ti bey tumnurp* [tenth grade].”

### Mr Sam Arth Va

Mr Sam Arth Va was born in 1958 in Ba Phnom in the Province of Prey Veng. He attended the May 18th High School, also known as Yukonthor High School.

During the Pol Pot regime, he was forced to live in the countryside as a farmer. He stated that during that time nobody had the opportunity to go to school. Everyone was relocated to forced labor camps. When Phnom Penh fell, he had three people with him. The members of his older brother’s family were all executed in one place at one time. He stated that this story is not unique. It happened everywhere.

**Figure 17: Mr Sam Arth Va, Mr Sok Heang Oun, Mr Ven Sun**



After the Pol Pot regime, he never went back to school, and in 1981 he volunteered for the army in the Province of Siem Reap. He served in the

army until 1987. During that time, he had an opportunity to study Cambodian literature for about seven months from several professors and scholars, including many from foreign countries.

Mr Sam Arth Va writes novels, and in 1981 he competed in the national writing contest and was awarded the gold medal. Kampuchea News and several publishing companies published his work as a serial novel. In 1990, he wrote a novel entitled *The Love of My Life* that was bought by a video production company. Later on, he competed in a contest sponsored by a national film and video production company in Phnom Penh and was awarded the second place prize. In 1997, he wrote *Burning Desire* that won the fourth place prize in the same contest and was published by the Khmer Writers Association.

Mr Sam Arth Va stated that he first read *Tum Teav* in school saying that, "all students studied that novel in Cambodian high school." He was also aware of the story being performed as a play and sung to the accompaniment of a *chapei*. He added that *chapei* singers who can perform *Tum Teav* have all probably died or no longer perform.

### Mr Sok Heang Oun

Sok Heang Oun was born in Phnom Penh on October 5, 1967. During the Khmer Rouge regime, he lost his father, older brother and sister. He is a graduate of the School of Engineering and Chemical Food Products and

presently works in the Mineral and Energy Industry where he is a director in the technical and engineering department.

Mr Sok Heang Oun stated that his primary interest is writing. He said that he likes to write prose more than poetry and that he has written several novels. Recently, he wrote *Everlasting Day* that won the number one prize in a national competition held every January 7, 1999.

He read *Tum Teav* in high school, and he has seen it performed by storytellers, on television, and in *Yike* theater.

#### Mr Ven Sun

Mr Ven Sun was born in 1938. He was orphaned as a child. His father died when he was only seven years old from some kind of epidemic disease. Lacking a father, Mr Ven Sun was raised by his grandfather.

Mr Ven Son stated that his educational background is divided into two parts. Initially, he was ordained a novice monk when he was seven years old. At the temple school, he learned the Pali language and poetry. Later, when he was 17 years old, he left the monkhood and attended public school. In 1965, he attended music school and was a member of the Tamrout Phirum band, as well as a song writer.

In 1970, he joined the army. From 1970 to 1975, he worked at the army radio station writing poems to entertain the soldiers while the government

was fighting the Khmer Rouge. During that time his nickname was Rith Sun Sary. During the Pot Pot regime, he lost an uncle, his wife and three month old baby, and a cousin. In 1979, he served as a marching band musician in the Cambodian army. He also performed a drama that was broadcast on the radio and attended school to study literature and writing. Mr Ven Son said that he prefers to write poetry. In 1987, he entered the national poetry contest when Mr Phon Cheng was the Minister of Culture and Information. One of his poems entitled "Always Remember" is about the brutality and atrocity of the Pol Pot regime. In 1973, he wrote "Words from a Poet," roughly 30 pages long, that won a first prize from the Ministry of Culture and Information.

In 1996, he applied to become a member of the Khmer Writers Association. Currently, he is a director of the Association. That year, his poem entitled "Last Word From Khmer Children" won fourth place in the annual writing contest. In 1998, he won the second place prize for his poem entitled "Heaven in the Dream." Mr Ven Sun stated that the poem is a true love story about a couple that was engaged prior to the fall of Phnom Penh and were separated during the communist regime. He said that the purpose of the poem is to remind future leaders of Cambodia to follow their conscience and not propaganda.

Mr Ven Sun first read *Tum Teav* in high school. He also read the story at the temple library. He stated that Venerable Som, Santhor Mok and Nou Kon all wrote versions of *Tum Teav*. He said that Sandhor Mok and



Venerable Som were the original authors and that Nou Kon wrote a similar story entitled *Teav Ek*.

### Mrs Sophany Oum

Ms Sophany Oum was born in 1946. In 1980, she was President of the Research Center at *Akphirakprasat* [Museum of Tourism and Temples Museum]. In 1989, the Ministry of Information and Culture assigned her to be the Deputy Director of the Royal Palace, and currently she is the Director of Communications at the Royal Palace.

From 1970 to 1975, Ms Sophany Oum was a student at Yukontor University in Phnom Penh, where she studied ancient history. She said that between 1975 and 1979 education was suspended for the entire population. During the Khmer Rouge period she was forced to live in Prateap Village, South Trapeang Thom District, Tramkok County in Takeo Province, known as Zone 105. Her mother, father, and four siblings died during that time. From 1979 to 1988, she was a deputy director of research at the *Kanithan Akphirak* [Tourism Museum] in Phnom Penh. Since 1993, she has been Director of Communication at the Royal Palace.

Ms Sophany Oum said she first studied *Tum Teav* in school, during the third year of high school (*tnak ti bey*). In addition to *Tum Teav*, she studied modern novels such as *Kolab Pailin*. When she started her professional career in 1985, she translated some texts into French with the help of a

Polish scholar. They also translated *Tum Teav*, and Mr Leang Hap An added a summary.

### Venerable Sao Khon Thamteroa

Venerable Sao Khon Thamteroa was born on April 17, 1934, in Orleur Village, Sangvoey District, Cheekreng County in Siem Reap Province. He was ordained as a novice monk when he was 14 years old, and he has been a monk since he was 20 years old. His parents died when he was young.

In 1974, Venerable Sao Khon left Morhamontrey Temple in Phnom Penh and went to Poaveal Temple in Battambang city. He met an old monk comrade, and they both decided to leave for Thailand while the border was still loosely controlled. During Khmer Rouge period, he lived in Thailand in Buriram Province. Later, he moved to the Dangkoa Temple in Surin province. One of his two siblings died during the Khmer Rouge regime.

He first heard *Tum Teav* on the radio in 1961. He also read the book at the temple library. Venerable Sao Khon said that he considered *Tum Teav* to be a true story, and that there is a lot of evidence to support this in Tbong Kmom where the story took place. He said that the story describes the secular and non-secular populations in Cambodian society, as well as its feudal elements. He said that the story is considered to be a national literary treasure.

### Mr Youk Chhang

Mr Youk Chhang was born in 1961. He is married and has two children. Before 1975, Mr Youk Chhang went to high school in Tuol Kok and completed his Diplome [*tnak ti bei*].<sup>228</sup> During the Khmer Rouge period he lost ten members of his immediate family.<sup>229</sup>

He survived the Khmer Rouge regime and left Cambodia in 1979 as a refugee. He was resettled in the United States and studied political science in Texas. In 1992, he returned to Cambodia to work for UNTAC.<sup>230</sup> Afterwards, he went back to the United States and joined the Republican Institute and produced training manuals on political parties, democracy and human rights. Later, he was invited to join the Cambodian Genocide Program at Yale University, and in 1995 he started the Documentation Center of Cambodia in order to gather information on the Khmer Rouge period from 1975 to 1979.

Mr Youk Chhang said he first read *Tum Teav* when he was seven years old. He added that his sister has a masters degree in Khmer and French literature, and she had many books at home by Victor Hugo, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others. He read all of those books, as well as many books that were translated into Khmer in 1968 and 1969. However, he didn't study *Tum Teav* in high school. Instead he studied classical texts and folk

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<sup>228</sup> Year 3 in the 12-1 French system.

<sup>229</sup> His father died before 1975, in the civil war during the Lon Nol period (1970-1975).

<sup>230</sup> The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia organized the 1993 elections.

stories like *Thmenh Chey*. He said the curriculum was designed to fit the political situation. Nonetheless, he said that *Tum Teav* was one of his favorite stories because during the Lon Nol period the story was dramatized in the *lkaon niyay* style. He said that a 1979 dramatic performance was done in *yike* style as well. He said that the dramatic rendering of *Tum Teav* was anti-royalist and portrayed the King in a negative light.

### **Interviewees' Viewpoints on Tum Teav**

What follows is a summary of the interviewees' viewpoints on the major themes in *Tum Teav* initially discussed in Chapter 3. In this chapter, we are particularly interested in how the opinions of the interviewees compare with those expressed in the study guides and critical texts produced in the 1960s and 1970s. Since most of the interviewees were students during the 1960s and 1970s, and would have used the critical texts in their studies, it is not surprising that their opinions are often similar to those expressed in the study guides and critical texts on *Tum Teav*.

A major difference between the study guides and the viewpoints of the interviewees is the added importance the interviewees give to notions of justice. The experience of the genocide perpetrated by the Pol Pot regime, along with the government propaganda of the Vietnamese installed Hun Sen government, has influenced the way that the interviewees interpret the characters and events of the story. Another experience that has apparently influenced the way the interviewees interpret the story is their exposure to and participation in western Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

that have been operating in Cambodia since at least 1993. Indeed, part of the mission for many of the NGOs is the promotion of human rights, particularly with regard to women and children, and the development of an independent judicial system.

The first part of this section deals with the theme of Buddhist morality and traditional codes of conduct. Similar to the critical texts, the interviewees pointed to the failure of the characters in the story to live up to the moral values defined by Buddhist doctrine and traditional codes of conduct. The second part is concerned with abuse of power by characters in the story. The third and final part of this section presents the interviewees' more general viewpoints on the breakdown of the system of justice in the story, along with their opinions about justice in contemporary Cambodian society and its notoriously corrupt legal system.<sup>231</sup> Here, many of the interviewees make a distinction between legal systems and morality and emphasize the importance of equality before the law. With the pending trials for the former leaders of the Khmer Rouge, notions of justice have a very personal importance for the interviewees, all of whom lost family members during the genocide.

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<sup>231</sup> In Cambodia's corrupt judicial system, the outcome of a case is often determined by one's ability to bribe officials. Consequently, those who can afford to pay the greater bribe can use the judicial system to their advantage to seek revenge or, for example, obtain land or a car.

## Buddhist Morality and Traditional Codes of Conduct

For all the interviewees, Buddhist doctrine and traditional codes of conduct was the basis for assessing the moral conduct of Tum and Teav.<sup>232</sup>

As discussed in Chapter 3, both Tum and Teav violate the prescribed rules with which they are expected to comply. Tum pursues Teav after disrobing without the head monk's permission. And Teav has sex with him while she is still "in the shade." Each of the interviewees' responses below site Teav's violation of the moral codes for young women. Also implicated was Noe, Teav's nanny to whom Teav's mother entrusted her daughter. Although many of the interviewees put the incident in historical context, the codes of conduct described in the story are still relevant in Cambodia today. Below are some excerpts from the interviews:

Mrs Sophany Oum:

"At that time, Cambodia had very strict traditional values. The violation of the moral standard on Teav's part is one error. Noe, who relates the news of Tum's beautiful singing voice to Teav's mother and thus allows the whole incident to unfold, can be blamed also."

Mrs Pal Vannarirak:

"Teav is at fault when she does not respect and obey the ancient culture and traditions of the society. She is a woman "in the shade." Why does

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<sup>232</sup> It is also noted that the expectation for compliance with these moral codes is particularly strict for young women whose reputations are seen as being more vulnerable than those of young men. There is a Cambodian saying that compares a young man to a piece of gold and a young woman to a piece of cotton. If the piece of gold should fall in the mud, it can be washed clean. However, if the cotton should be dirtied, the stain can never be completely removed.

she fall in love with someone, especially with a monk? During that time, our culture was very strict. For men and women to meet and fall in love in the house was unacceptable.”

Recall that in Chapter 3, Ouk Saman identifies extenuating circumstances that mitigate the degree of wrongdoing committed by Tum and Teav. Although Tum and Teav have clearly violated traditional codes of conduct, Ouk Saman balances his judgment in light of the complexity of the characters and their situation. We find that here as well in the comments of Mrs Pol Pisey and Mr You Bo.

Mrs Pol Pisey balanced her assessment of Teav’s conduct by viewing her situation from a modern, psychological perspective:

“Teav was born at a time when tradition ran deep and women were expected to be obedient and respect the culture. As soon as she sees Tum, she falls in love at first sight. This is one huge error. It is a serious violation of our culture when she sleeps with a man while she is “in the shade.” If we talk about moral values for women, it is a serious offense. However, I would not criticize or blame her for this. I would rather analyze the situation using psychology. That is to say that she is a mature woman, but she is confined in an environment that restricts her freedom. Her mother uses the culture to justify her control over Teav. All humans need love regardless of their sex. The suppression or sanction of urges for sexuality will backfire when the time comes. So when the time is right, nothing can stop them. Therefore, I would not blame Teav for that. However, if you view her according to our culture, Teav is wrong.

Mr You Bo suggested that Teav is not in control of herself when she makes love with Tum:

“Teav commits a mistake, but not while her state of mind is fully aware of what she is doing.”

Tum's behavior is governed by the rules and expectations that apply to novice monks. At the top of the list is strict compliance with the instructions of the Abbot of the temple. Tum is also expected to comply with the Buddhist precepts that prohibit a monk from having any physical contact with women.

Mrs Sophany Oum:

"Tum is a monk. He violates the Buddhist moral code by falling in love and using magic spells. He makes huge errors."

Mrs Nimola Yim:

"[Disrobing by himself] is against the religious code, a violation of Buddhist values."

Mr Sam Arth Va spoke for Mr Ven Sun and Mr You Bo as well when he said:

"There are a lot of errors and weaknesses with all of the characters, but I will choose only three issues to talk about. First, there is the violation of Cambodian social norms. Secondly, there is the violation of traditional values and ways of choosing a marriage partner. Thirdly, there is the use of force and absolute power. Tum is wrong on the first two categories. As a monk, he should not even think about women, never mind singing to her and using a magic spell to win her heart. When he returns to the temple, he does not even pay attention to the head monk. He makes another mistake when he disrobes by himself without proper consent. He even lies, which is another violation of the ethical conduct for a monk. Another bad action by Tum is when he sneaks out to meet Teav and sleeps with her without a proper wedding. But Tum is a person who cannot control his emotions. At the end of the story, he acts foolishly by getting drunk and kissing Teav in front of everyone. It is a bad move that causes his death."



As with the critical texts discussed in Chapter 3, the interviewees generally agreed that the most compelling extenuating circumstance is the true love between Tum and Teav, along with the courage they display before more powerful individuals. Tum and Teav exemplify the notion of *ku praing* [a predestined couple], for which the interviewees generally feel a strong affection and sympathy. Another image that was evoked by the interviewees is that of *ku komsot* that refers to a couple that has endured hardship together. For survivors of the genocide, these images resonate strongly.

Mr Pech Tum Kravel:

“Tum informs Ah Chun through his singing that he and Teav are indeed husband and wife. This is the second time that Tum demonstrates his bravery on behalf of his love. The first one is in front of the king of the land.”

Mrs Nimola Yim:

“Tum is innocent. When he goes to interfere at the wedding, it is because he is concerned about Teav who is his wife. Tum and Teav have endured many obstacles already.”

However, Mr Youk Chhang sees Tum's love for Teav very differently. He questions the sincerity of his affection for her, and sees Tum as simply a rash young man not worthy of sympathy:

“Tum makes two mistakes with Teav's mother. First, he sneaks in and has sex with Teav. Secondly, he doesn't even care when Teav's mother is supposedly sick, and he doesn't even intend to come to comfort her, to bring some fruits, some gift. Tum is supposed to do something like

that. In those old days that's what Tum should have done. Secondly, Tum should never have let Teav, this beautiful woman, go back to Tbong Kmom alone. Tum should have been afraid that someone might arrest her or rape her. To me, it shows that Tum really doesn't love Teav from the bottom of his heart. If Tum had gone with Teav, perhaps the mother would have understood that they love each other and that she should not break them apart.

"I don't want to blame Murn Guon. In fact, he's more responsible than Tum because he protects Teav. I don't think Murn Guon knows that Tum and Teav are married, so it would be wrong to blame Murn Guon or Ah Chun for doing those things to Tum. In fact, it showed what the husband is supposed to do for his wife: to protect her from a crazy guy like that."

Teav's nanny, Noe, and Tum's best friend, Pech, have parallel roles in the story. In this case many of the interviewees stated that Pech does not fulfill his obligations as Tum's best friend and companion. Given the importance placed on friendship that borders on brotherhood, this is a very serious fault.

Mrs Sophany Oum:

"Pech, who was Tum's best friend, fails to advise him properly."

Mrs Pal Vannarirak:

"Pech knows that Tum has done something inappropriate. Why doesn't he intervene or help as a friend should?"

Mr Sam Arth Va:

"Pech, who is Tum's best friend, does not help or educate Tum when he badly needs it. Pech allows Tum to do whatever he wants as when he sleeps with Teav. In this case, Pech should have told him to act

according to the norms and culture of the land. When Tum drinks and kisses Teav in front of everybody at the wedding, Pech should have advised his friend to restrain himself from all those wrongdoings by warning or taking him out of the place or telling him to deliver the royal edict. If Tum did not comply, Pech could have taken the letter and shown it to Ah Chun himself, and this could have made the story end differently."

Mr Pech Tum Kravel had a more balanced assessment of Pech:

"The accusation that Pech is to blame is correct, but there are many factors involved, which cannot be completely understood. In general, people should act and behave properly; however, that was sort of an emergency where things could not be planned or calculated."

### Abuse of Power

The issue of abuse of power by King Reamea, Governor Ah Chun and Teav's mother, Yay Phan, came up repeatedly in the interviews. However, since many Cambodians believe that it is not appropriate to criticize the monarchy in any way, discussing the King's abuse of power was a somewhat sensitive subject for some of the interviewees. Indeed, while I was in Phnom Penh, the criticism of King Sihanouk in local newspapers led to their censorship by government authorities. While most of the interviewees apparently spoke openly about their opinions of King Reamea's abuse of power in the story, some of them appeared hesitant to discuss the issue.

The issue of abuse of power with regard to King Reamea is primarily centered around his punishment of Ah Chun, Yay Phan and the villagers of

Tbong Kmom. In this regard, most of the interviewees agreed that King Reamea's punishment is unnecessarily cruel.

Mrs Sophany Oum exemplified this view when she said:

"I think the King's punishment is not appropriate. The people who committed crimes should have been punished, and those who did not, like the villagers of Tbong Kmom, should not have been a part of this punishment."

Mrs Pal Vannarirak tactfully prefaced her response to this question then went on to express her disapproval of the King's punishment:

"I'm not sure that I recall the King's punishment of Ah Chun completely. But for the King to order Yay Phan, Ah Chun and seven generations of relatives to be killed was a big mistake. It's like he was just flaunting his power. Now, all those relatives did not do anything wrong here. The King should not have blamed them. If Ah Chun did something wrong, he alone should pay for the crime. It is unfair for other innocent relatives to be made slaves. The King acts out of anger. He commits a crime by punishing people who don't know anything about the situation."

Mr Sam Arth Va put the King's punishment in political context:

"[The King's punishment of Ah Chun] is another example of feudalism and absolutism. It is too severe and an injustice to all of those relatives of Ah Chun. It was injustice to the people in Tbong Kmom who are innocent. In the book, the people in any town where the bell could be heard from Teav's house are enslaved. But that was the Cambodia of the 16th century, when the King's divine right was undisputed and absolute."

Mr You Bo is the most critical of the King when he says:

"The King's punishment was too savage and severe and absolute. At that time there was no justice because it was always about absolute power. The King always won. The people always lost."

Some of the interviewees qualified their view of abuse of power. Mr Pech Tum Krael, for example, did not feel that the King abuses his power and pointed to the fact that he allows Tum and Teav to marry after learning of their love for one another:

"Some would have the opinion that the King's punishment of Ah Chun is rather severe. However, if you think about people and the value of life regardless of their social classes, I think the punishment is appropriate. For example, Ah Chun does kill an innocent person and thus receives the death penalty in the end. As for the people who collaborate with Ah Chun and are punished with taxation, I think the King's anger is appropriate. For the most part, I think the King had good judgment.

"In my opinion, there is justice in the story from all points of view. Kings had to have respect for the ten moral codes of conduct. For example, even though he has Teav as his concubine, he acts properly by respecting the love affair of the couple. His punishment of Ah Chun and Yay Phan is also appropriate for the nature of the crime. However, one must remember that the story takes place in the 16th century, and we are now in the 20th century."

Turning to the question of abuse of power by Ah Chun, Mr Pech Tum Krael pointed out that although the Ah Chun knows that Tum is already married to Teav, he abuses his authority as Governor to have Tum killed:

"Tum informs Ah Chun through his singing at the wedding that he and Teav are indeed husband and wife. Thus, Ah Chun abuses his power and does not give appropriate consideration to the matter. He then orders Tum to be killed which he later realizes is his fault."

Mrs Pal Vannarirak agrees:

"Ah Chun is the kind of person who abuses power. He not only dares to break an honest marriage. He also challenges the King's authority. He is the kind of person who would stop at nothing."

Most of the interviewees agreed that Yay Phan is most to blame for abuse of power in the story in her treatment of her daughter Teav. As with the absolute authority given to the King whose word is law throughout the Kingdom, Teav's mother enjoys a similar status in relation to her daughter. According to many of the interviewees, Yay Phan abuses her power out of greed, and this leads to the story's tragic ending.

Mr Pech Tum Kravel:

"There is a popular saying: 'The cake is never bigger than the mold' that is interpreted as 'children must obey their parents.' This is an old cultural value. In general, in later generations there have been changes in this concept. However, in the old days, children had to obey and respect their parents. Sometimes, a man and woman did not have to be in love to be married if the parents preferred the match and believed it would bring happiness for their children in the future. Thus, children had to adjust their feelings and respect their parents' choice. This is one old strict tradition. Yay Phan's error is that she is too greedy. She wants money, wealth and power, and that leads to the death of her daughter and to her own insanity later."

Reminiscent of Ouk Saman's analysis, Mr Sam Arth Va explained that Yay Phan reveals her singular motivation for wealth and status when she changes her mind regarding Teav's marriage according to the wealth of the prospective suitor:

"The theory of 'the cake is never bigger than the mold' is not such a bad idea. It's the people who give it a bad name. At first, Yay Phan sees

Tum as an educated man who loves Buddhism and has a beautiful voice. Though both Teav and Tum are not engaged yet, Yay Phan is in love with Tum's personality. However, when Murn Guon comes to engage Teav, Yay Phan turns against Tum. Furthermore, when the King goes around the Kingdom looking for someone to be his top concubine, she dumps Murn Guon out of greed and goes this time after the royal family. Thus, it demonstrates that she is absolutely greedy. Cambodians believe that if one is too obsessed with wealth and power, it might backfire just as it did with Yay Phan. In the end, she loses her daughter and all of the things she loves dearly. She wants her daughter to be secure but she uses the wrong approach."

Mr You Bo described the injustice of "the cake is never bigger than the mold" when he said:

"This has to do with not giving consideration to individual rights or liberty. It applies to parents versus children; ordinary people versus the ruling class; and the king versus the people. It means that those who have power can do what they want and as they please.

Some of the interviewees had somewhat different views on Yay Phan's treatment of Teav. Above, Mrs Nimola Yim described the King's punishment of Ah Chun as "appropriate." Then, in a way that is reminiscent of some of the critical texts discussed in Chapter 3, she added that Yay Phan does in fact act in the best interests of her daughter by arranging her marriage to the son of the wealthy Governor:

"Any mother would have tried to do anything to get fame and fortune for her daughter. Mothers want prosperity and happiness for their loved ones and do not want their children to endure poverty and indignity. However, Teav's mother is not aware that what she is doing would result in such an outcome."

She then put her assessment in historical context and contrasted notions of freedom in the story with modern ideas of "personal freedom" and

“equality between the sexes” that appear to reflect recent Western influence on Cambodian society.

“In Khmer society back then, all children were under the complete control of their parents. It was perfectly fine for that time. Today is different. That kind of control is not appropriate. People demand more personal freedom and liberty and equality between the sexes. Freedom within the family is the same thing. People are born to be equal. Back then it was not the same and there were many cultural values imposed on people.”

In a way not very different from the nationalistic viewpoint of Kim Sam Or in Chapter 3, Mr Sam Arth Va advocated for an organized effort to bring greater freedom for women in Cambodian society:

At that time, if I were Teav, I would have revolted and energized a feminist movement that could have been an effective message for all mothers. It would show that the oppression of children by their mothers regarding such issues could cause a harmful legacy. She could have set a new standard for the next generation of women.”

Mr Hong Soth agreed that arranged marriage is an outdated custom that violates “freedom of choice”:

“The idea that the mother is always right when it comes to deciding the future of her children is a value and norm of the Udong era in Cambodian history. It was justice for that time because arranging the child’s marriage was the role of the parents. Nowadays it is an injustice because it is a violation of a grown-up person’s freedom of choice.”

One of the more negative effects of abuse of power is the silencing of the underclass, particularly women. In the following excerpt, Mr Sam Arth Va states that Teav should have spoke up when she is chosen to be a concubine of the King. She does not, Mr Sam Arth Va argues, because of “her inability to oppose the pressure from the environment”:



"When the King's men go around the Kingdom looking for the finest concubine, they choose Teav for the King. Teav again decides to remain silent instead of confessing that she is no longer a virgin. She might have been able to plead to those men not to take her to the King because she is not a pure woman, but, she remains silent because of the King's authority. Another factor that I think is especially important is Teav's inability to oppose the pressure from the environment that never gives her the opportunity to speak freely."

## Justice

The last section of this chapter is concerned with the theme of justice. The interviewees indicated that the breakdown in the system of justice in the story is a result of Tum's failure to deliver the King's edict to Ah Chun. That is, if the letter had reached its destination, the tragedy would have been avoided and Tum would have been reunited with Teav..

Mr Pech Tum Kravel described the two opposing views on the reason for Tum's failure to deliver the King's letter to Ah Chun:

"Many people blame Tum for not delivering the royal message to Ah Chun. Some blame Tum's bad Karma and irresponsibility for getting drunk and losing control. This allows his opponents to become very angry and end his life. There is the counter argument that Tum is fully aware of what he is doing, but he is disgusted with injustice and thinks that he could solve this problem without royal help. However, he only creates a big problem for himself. The two opinions have sharp differences.

For the most part however, the interviewees blamed Tum for getting drunk and not delivering the letter.

Mrs Pal Vannarirak:

"Tum knows that Ah Chun is a powerful man who has taken his wife away. Why doesn't he use the royal edict to handle the situation with Ah Chun? This is his weakness. Another weakness is when he becomes drunk at the wedding and acts very inappropriately. Tum should have used the power of the letter to stop the wedding.

Mr Youk Chhang agreed:

"Tum has the King's letter. But when he comes to the wedding party, he gets drunk with the musicians. Again it shows Tum's arrogance and that he's not a responsible man. First of all, musicians are considered to be low class. You can argue from the point of view that Tum shows that he feels all people are important in a democracy. But he should have just delivered the letter, and maybe it would have been the end of the story. Instead, he gets drunk and crazy."

Many of the interviewees made a distinction between moral ethics and the law. The most important issue for many of the interviewees was equality before the law. Mr Pech Tum Kravel made one of the few references to Karma, the Buddhist concept of justice, according to which one's present circumstances are the result of past actions, or, as discussed in Chapter 3 in the section on Vandy Kaonn, "Do good, get good. Do bad, get bad." When asked to define "justice," Mr Pech Tum Kravel replied: "It means that when you do good, you get what you deserve and if you do bad, the same should apply to your actions." Reminiscent of Vandy Kaonn's criticism of the misapplication of the idea of "do good, get good", Mr Pech Tum Kravel made the following distinction between moral justice and legal systems:

"From my understanding, there are two different kinds of justice. One is a moral value and the other concerns societal values and rules. For example, if someone robs your motorcycle, is it enough if we tell him that if you do good, you will get good things, and if you do bad, then

you will have to pay for it. There must be another way to protect justice in the society, or is that enough already?

"What I meant to say is that there must be a high standard of moral value. However, if you try to find justice in society according to law, the robbery is a violation of justice, the property belongs to the owner. In general, it only makes sense to explore facts in the court of law. Once wrong and right are identified, then there is justice right there. They need law."

When asked if there are appropriate laws to serve justice in Cambodia today, Mr Pech Tum Kravel replied:

"I believe that I am not the only one who thinks this. Everybody knows there are laws, but they are not enough. First, we must have sufficient laws. But that is not enough. We all must obey those laws from top to bottom. Then I believe there will be justice at hand."

From another perspective Mrs Sophany Oum's stressed the importance of forgiveness and the harmful consequences of seeking revenge. Like Mr Pech Tum Kravel, she made a distinction between responding to wrongdoing with forgiveness on a personal level and the legal response by the judicial system. When asked if the King in *Tum Teav* is good or bad, Mrs Sophany Oum said:

"I am sorry. I am not a judge. I would decline to give any comment. Maybe it would not be accurate. Maybe somebody else is more knowledgeable than me about this question. For example, there was a person who did something really bad to my husband during the Pol Pot regime. When the Khmer Rouge was no longer in power, my husband did not seek revenge on him. When the individual apologized, he then forgave him and went on to be his friend. However, the law is different. Those who commit crimes should be punished. On a personal level, there is a sense of justice through forgiving, understanding that there is nothing to be gained by seeking revenge upon one another. If you kill

people, your soul will be lost. However, if you try to correct things in a court of law, maybe it is better in my opinion."

When asked if the King's punishment restored justice, Mrs Sophany Oum responded:

"I did not know what had to be done to serve justice at that time. Each country has its own laws. Crimes should be punished accordingly. If you ask how I feel, I can tell you that seeking revenge is too severe and too tragic. Burying them alive and executing them by raking over their heads is not necessary. I am a person full of compassion and sympathy. I feel it is too severe.

"We believe in Buddhism, and we listen to the Dharma which teaches us to seek peace and nonviolent solutions. For example, if someone kills our children, and we kill theirs, then their children will come back and kill one of us again. It would never end. If somebody committed a bad crime against us, we should try to tolerate it and go away at that point."

When asked about the participation of former Khmer Rouge in the current Cambodian government, Mrs Sophany Oum statement sounded much like the Hun Sen government's propaganda that says reconciliation is necessary in order to end the cycle of violence:

"It is a complex problem. If we identified who is red and who is black, we would never find peace. In my opinion, all Khmers are victims of somebody's schemes and tricks. We have all made mistakes and are responsible for our own mistakes. The result of pointing fingers at one another is an endless cycle of violence. The only way to be fair is for everyone to be responsible for his/her history and move together to remedy our mistakes so we can catch up with our neighboring nations. It is useless to say who is red and who is not."

When asked to define "justice," Mr Sam Arth Va, like Mr Pech Tum Kravel, described justice on the one hand in terms of morality and on the other in terms of legal codes:

"Anything that has moral righteousness is justice. Anything that has to do with truth, logic or reason and properly amended by the civil laws is justice. For my country, I see justice as being very far away from the hope and expectations of the population who live under the law and obey the law. I would like to decline any more comment on this matter."

Mr Hong Soth described justice in terms of "peace and equality" and noted the difficulty of enacting justice:

"Justice has a lot to do with truth. Justice can be sweet for one person and bitter for another. Common justice is the idea that people are born and long for peace and equality. They tend to avoid harming each other. Committing wrong actions, being ignorant, uncivilized, etc., are injustices for others. This is the common justice we want. Special justice is justice specifically for a person. It is for "A" but not necessary for "B", "C" or "D." We all want common justice, justice for all. That is to say that happiness without harming one another. Nepotistic justice is an injustice. Justice for Tum and Teav is honesty and faithfulness. Justice for the King is giving up Teav for Tum."

Finally, Mr Youk Chhang, the director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia, gave an involved explanation of justice that also stressed the difficulty of enacting laws that are fair to everyone, particularly with respect to the attempt to bring the Khmer Rouge leadership to trial:

"Justice means that everyone accused of a crime has to be equal before the law. Justice in Cambodian society today depends on the particular case. Sometimes there is, sometimes there isn't. There are different meanings for different people."

"So what is justice? The farmers don't want us to punish Ieng Sary or Nuon Chea. They want you to punish the one who killed their husbands and wives. But at the same time, we have to punish the leaders of the Khmer Rouge. What does justice mean, for us or for the victim? Then also me, I had my sister, brother, niece and nephew killed by the Khmer Rouge. I know that Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan didn't kill my relatives, but based on this study, I learned that they produced the policy that led to the killing of my sister and brother. To me, justice means punishing the Khmer Rouge leaders. The cadre at the local level who killed who commit... if they didn't do it someone would have killed them. So we each have our own definition of justice: the perpetrator, the victim, myself. And then the Khmer Rouge said I would not do such a thing. It's all because the Americans bombed Cambodia. "I'm doing this to save my country," they said. "If I didn't do this, maybe Cambodia wouldn't have peace right now." The leaders say this. So they have their own definition of justice. To them, the Khmer Rouge leadership, justice means to get rid of the Americans, to get rid of the kingship- so people would be free from slavery, so people would be equal.

"So even now you have past and today [he draws something on a piece of paper], and this is justice. And here you have justice according to the victim; according to the perpetrator; according to the Khmer Rouge leaders; according to individuals; according to international interests. And here you have justice according to NGOs; justice according to the government; justice according to the military; according to people who give money to Cambodia; and by many others. So in Cambodia, there's no single definition of what justice means. It should be very simple. Everyone is equal before the law. But now because of the political situation... so now how do you mobilize everyone to understand that justice means everyone equal before the law?

"But I think we can have a single definition of justice if you separate politics and other things out from justice. Call it independence, I mean independent courts, independent judges. The whole judicial system has to be independent. And then people can stay away from it and then you implement what the law states.

"Legal codes on the one hand and tradition, customs, Buddhist teachings, etc., on the other have to be separate. Law is law. Culture is

culture. Religion is religion. If someone commits a crime, why not plow him over as in *Tum Teav*, if that's the custom. It's the evolution of the culture. People change from time to time, and laws stay the same or amend according to the needs of the society. These two have to be separate. So people should not be confuse the law with Buddha's teachings. Not all Cambodians are Buddhist. Just because they go to the temple, doesn't mean they are Buddhist. It's a culture, not a religion. If you look into the Buddhist teachings- I haven't read much but from what I understand- part of it, if you understand Buddhism, it's about teaching people about not doing the wrong thing. But I think people interpret it differently because they don't have a deep knowledge of what Buddhism is all about. Buddhism teaches you: if you if you do a bad thing, you receive a bad thing; if you do a good thing, you receive a good thing. You have to distinguish between Buddhism, the culture and the law."

### **Conclusion: *Tum Teav and Systems of Justice in Cambodia Today***

In this final section, I would like to discuss the system of justice in *Tum Teav* in relation to Cambodia's current judicial system as it prepares for a trial of the Khmer Rouge leadership nearly twenty years after the genocide.

To begin, I would like to propose a definition for "systems of justice." By this I mean the system that produces, enforces and adjudicates the laws for a society. The members of the group abide by the law willingly in the belief that their compliance is in their best interests. In doing so, they believe they will have greater access to desired resources than if there were a free-for-all. The members of the group thus exercise self-restraint with

the expectation of mutual gain.<sup>233</sup> What is important for our discussion here is how to assess the extent to which the people in Cambodian society *willingly* comply with the law.

This brings up the Khmer word *klaich*. *Klaich* literally means "to fear". It also connotes the meaning "to respect". A child *klaichs* his or her parents. The people *klaich* the king, and so on. In this sense the children obey the parents and the people obey the king both out of respect for their authority and fear of the consequences for noncompliance.<sup>234</sup> In our analysis of Cambodian systems of justice, the distinction between fear and respect is particularly important. If a system is just to the extent that the people willingly comply with its laws, what degree of fear must be present for the system to become unjust such that compliance becomes a means for avoiding punishment without any prospect of greater access to resources?

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<sup>233</sup> This view of justice was described by the 18th century Welsh philosopher David Hume as "an artificial virtue," since it is based on self-interest. The notion of justice as "natural virtue" according to Hume is a subsequent effect of the first instance. The moral dimension of justice develops when compliance with laws out of self-interest comes to be seen a virtue itself.

<sup>234</sup> The relationship between parent and child or king and people is complicated. The client-patron relationship is used to explain the complex interrelationship between those with means and those who are without. The "have-not" depends on "the have" for protection especially in times of adversity, and in exchange the client gives his steadfast loyalty to the patron. This is used to explain many kinds of relationships in Cambodia's hierarchical society. In addition to the two examples already mentioned, this includes the relationship between monk and laity; rich and poor; old and young; men and women; etc. With the relationship between the people and the king, the king is authorized by divine right to be the word of law.



To analyze *Tum Teav* in terms of the breakdown of the system of justice, let's begin by describing the system at work in the story. In *Tum Teav*, the King embodies the system of justice. He has jurisdiction over the Kingdom and literally "speaks the law." Although he refers to his ministers, he has the final word. In effect, he produces, enforces and adjudicates the law. The system breaks down however when the King's edict fails to reach the Governor. I think it is safe to believe that there would not have been a crime if the letter had reached its destination. If the Governor had read the letter, he would surely have complied with it and called off the wedding. His compliance with the law would have been done primarily out of fear of the King. It would also have been done willingly, in order to maintain his position as Governor and the access to resources that it affords. The system of justice would have functioned and no harm would have been done.

The first question to ask therefore is: who is to blame for the letter not reaching its destination? There are many possibilities. As discussed in Chapter 4, Tum is to blame for not delivering the letter as instructed by the King. But there are extenuating circumstances. He is young, foolish and upset. In his condition, he simply forgets to fulfill his task. The next possibility is Pech. As Tum's best friend, it is his responsibility to act in Tum's behalf and deliver the letter to the Governor when Tum becomes drunk and incapable of doing it himself. On the other hand, Tum would not have gotten drunk in the first place if Teav had not served him wine. But as Tum's wife, she is obligated to obey him. It has also been pointed

out that the King may be responsible for the breakdown of the system by giving the task of delivering the letter to Tum instead of a palace messenger.<sup>235</sup> However, most people agree that Teav's mother is most to blame for the story's tragic outcome for instigating the sequence of events in the first place. To a lesser degree, this is also true of the Governor and his family. They are the ones most responsible for committing the crime, i.e., not complying with the King's edict. But this is not the same as being responsible for the breakdown of the system of justice. Their wrongdoing would not have led to such tragic consequences if the letter had reached its destination and the system had functioned. In the end, it may not be possible to assign blame to any individual for the failure of the system.

That said, what concerns us more directly in this discussion is the means by which the King attempts to restore the system of justice. By inflicting such an extreme punishment on Teav's mother, the Governor and his family, the King reinstates the people's fear and respect for his word. In this system, the law is embodied in a single individual, not a body of law that is objectively interpreted by a judge. As a god-king, the King rules by divine right, and it is his prerogative to exercise the full force of his power to restore his place as the single, uncontested source of the law.

According to our definition of justice above, the system is just as long as the people willingly comply with the laws produced, enforced and

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<sup>235</sup> This possibility was suggested to me by Ben Kiernan.

adjudicated by the King. It can be argued that the people do willingly give the King in the story this authority in the belief that his divine powers as a god-king protect them and assure them of a good harvest, etc. However, the King's status as divine ruler complicates the distinction between respect and fear, and our assessment of the extent to which the system of justice in *Tum Teav* is just remains unresolved. That is, we are not sure if the people comply with the law willingly or simply out of fear.

In many ways this system has arguably been maintained to the present time in Cambodia. Following independence, Prince Sihanouk ruled Cambodia as though by divine right. He had the authority and the prerogative to dictate the law while maintaining the pretense of a democratic system. Currently, although there is a body of law produced by a legislature and a Cambodian judiciary, it is questionable to what extent they function independently of Prime Minister Hun Sen. After many years, Hun Sen has acquired the attributes that enable him to rule as though by divine right: royalty; "one who knows"; "one who struggles".<sup>236</sup> To what degree do the Cambodian people today willingly abide by the laws in the belief that doing so is in their best interest?

Once again, we come up against the question of the distinction between respect and fear. While many people, particularly among the older generation, may have seen Prince Sihanouk as a god-king ruling by divine

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<sup>236</sup> These features of the ruler were described to me by Steve Heder.

right, that belief has steadily been on the wane. It is unlikely that the majority of people felt that way about Sihanouk in the 1960s, when he quelled the democratic opposition, or presently about Hun Sen. Slowly but surely, the Cambodian system of justice is making a transition from an autocratic system to one where an objective interpretation of a body of law takes precedence over the authority of a single individual in power. The movement from a culture of impunity to a culture of accountability among the nations of the world is slowly but surely gaining momentum. It will be accomplished case by case over a period of many years. A trial of the Khmer Rouge leadership, though fraught with challenges and uncertainties, will provide an opportunity for the Cambodian government to contribute to its achievement.

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